Social Determinants of Health: What are they and why are they important?

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www.publichealth.ie/hia
Determinants of health and well-being

The determinants of health and well-being in our neighbourhoods

Barton & Grant 2005
The case for action on health across sectors

“Having accepted that the determinants lie in many different sectors, there is obviously a need to look at policies in all sectors, assessing their likely impact on health, and especially on the health of the most vulnerable groups in society, and to coordinate policies accordingly”.

- Margaret Whitehead 1990
Chronic illness likely to increase

- Predicted 40% increase in hypertension, CHD, stroke and diabetes by 2020

- Adults living in more deprived areas are more likely to be living with a chronic condition
Social determinants of health matter even more for poorer people

‘The effects of social processes on health follow the social gradient: the lower the socioeconomic position the more health is affected by the social determinants of health.’

Sir Michael Marmot, WHO CSDH
Review of health inequalities: England

‘Action on health inequalities requires action across the social determinants of health’

Strategic Review of Health Inequalities, England, Feb 2010
Action on health inequalities: EU

• Contributing to understanding the problem

• Highlighting potential solutions

• Stimulating action and greater engagement
Social inequalities and environmental risk: WHO Europe

- Summary of evidence on inequalities in environmental risk (gender, marginalised groups, lifecourse)

- Key recommendations
  - Improve daily living conditions
  - Tackle distribution of power, money and resources
  - Better measurement and understanding
Community profiles

• Information about the whole community
  - to assess potential health impacts of a proposal on the population
  - to help make actions more specific and relevant to the community
  - to establish a baseline for later comparison

• Information about specific groups
  - to assess potential health impacts on vulnerable groups (show inequitable distribution of impacts)
  - to ensure actions at least prevent inequalities widening and ideally reduce existing inequalities
  - to establish a baseline for later comparison
Building community profiles

- Demographics
- Health and health behaviour
- Measures of social deprivation
- Other measures dependent on proposal:
  - Housing
  - Transport
  - Environment
  - Crime
  - Service provision
Issues re data for community profiles

• Availability
  - Specific issues
  - Specific groups
  - Specific area (especially small area level)

• Accessibility
  - Who collects what?
  - Permission

• Utility
  - Timeliness (e.g. employment statistics)
  - Comparability
The power of data

Deaths from transport accidents in NI by social class (SMR per 100,000)

*Deaths from transport accidents in NI by social class (SMR per 100,000)*