

Poverty and Poor Health

Name

Institution

Course Information

FACT SHEET

Definition

Research has identified a correlation between poverty and poor health. People who have lower income tend to have more health issues and live shorter than those with more income. Poverty generally exposes people to unfavorable living and workplace conditions, pollution, and stress. This highlights the negative impact of poverty on health.

Current Situation

- 31 percent of adults living below the poverty line have been diagnosed with mental health issues at some point, double the average for people with high income (Marmot & Bell, 2016).
- 32 percent of adults in poverty have obesity while 17 percent of adults in poverty have asthma. These are each at least 7 percentage points higher than for adults not in poverty (World Health Organization, 2016).
- Diabetes, depression, high blood pressure, and heart attacks affect people in poverty more than those not in poverty (World Health Organization, 2016).
- 33 percent of adults in poverty had smoking-related health issues, compared to 19 percent for adults not in poverty (World Health Organization, 2016).
- 50 percent of adults state that they eat enough servings of fruits and vegetables in a week, compared to almost 60 percent of adults not in poverty (Getzen, 2017).
- 92 percent of those not in poverty said it was easy to get fresh fruits and vegetables, but only 83 percent of adults in poverty said they could easily access affordable fresh fruits and vegetables (Getzen, 2017).

Additional Links

- Groups that are marginalized are usually worst affected, lacking in information, deprived of access and money to important health services.
- Poor people have to make difficult choices as they often have to decide between their own health and the needs of their children or families (Brown & Cagney, 2003).
- Cultural and social barriers mean that very poor people use health services less than they should.
- Cost of medication, consultancy fees and transport have a negative impact on health choices for very poor people as they tend to prefer to use the money on more pressing concerns such as rent, food and school fees (Murray, 2006).
- Very poor people generally live in bad conditions, contributing to spread of diseases and lack of proper sanitation.

Challenges

- Financial inability.
- Cultural barriers.
- Tendency of marginalized areas to lack proper health facilities.
- Housing and living conditions.
- Stress of living on low income leads to poor health decisions.

Solutions

- Provide better nutrition, clean water and sanitation in marginalized areas.
- Improving access to health facilities.
- Increasing affordability of drugs, doctor's fees and transport to health facilities.
- Improving national health systems to embrace low income groups.
- Reducing gap between high income earners and those in poverty.

- Educating those in poverty about the importance of good health decisions.

References

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