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Poverty and Poor Health

Introduction

Poor health is associated with several factors, one of which is poverty. There have been controversies³ that poverty and poor health are highly linked. Some individuals argue that poverty does not cause poor health, while others say it does not mainly lead to poor health as compared to other factors. However, many articles argue and stand by poor health is caused mostly by poverty because this factor is rooted in social, economic and political injustices (Wolfe 28). Hence making it evident that poor individuals are more prone to having poor health. This paper is going to discuss the arguments that surround the connection between poor health and poverty.

It is known that an individual with good health has a long life expectancy as compared to those with poor health. A person can get infected with any disease if they have low immunity or is present in areas prone to infections (Cattell 1510). Also, if individual life or is surrounded by individuals who have contagious diseases, they can infect each other. But the most argued factor that causes and results in poor health is poverty. Poor people are always caught in the injustices that occur in healthcare and other sectors in a country. Most of these people are not catered for appropriately because they lack the resources for them to get proper healthcare services. Hence, when one comes in with a disease, they are not well looked after, which in turn leads to the worst-case and eventually death. Such instances or cases are treated lightly as compared to individuals who can afford proper healthcare treatment. However, some individuals argue that

there is a percentage of poor people who are affected by poor health since they take care of themselves and their families. Hence, this controversy has led to several arguments, but the articles and scholars who agree that there is a considerable connection between poverty and poor health have won the debate.

Most individuals who are associated with poverty involve themselves with dangerous activities that can make them prone to be infected with diseases. Such activities include substance abuse since they live in areas or places where the drugs are readily available and affordable. Hence, they get addicted faster. When they get addicted, they are unable to take care of themselves since all they think about is getting and using the drugs. In the process of not taking care of themselves, they do not eat, and most of them are probably homeless, which leads them to contract diseases like pneumonia, bronchitis or chronic cough. Others may contract liver cirrhosis or lung cancer due to drinking or smoking too much. I know wealthy people also contract addiction, but, poor people have the most percentage in this area.

Other ways that show that poverty causes and lead to poor health are illiteracy, poor nutrition, lack of clean water, lack of food, harsh realities which can lead to stress and much worse depression. Not being able to fend to oneself or one's family can cause a lot of stress and other mental disorders such as depression. An individual with depression cannot be active or do anything that can help to elevate their moods in any way. Hence, poverty leads to mental health deterioration which is also a part of poor health (Payne, p169). Overcrowding is another element of poor health due to poverty since individuals live in slums where the population is high, and the houses are close together, making them prone to contracting diseases much faster than people living in the suburbs (Estrada 4).

Hence when all this is combined, then it advocates for poor health at all costs. Most individuals and articles argue that most African countries with the highest number of poverty are more prone to having poor health as compared to other countries in other continents. Some part of this statement is correct because many poor people in several African countries have health problems or are prone to contracting diseases such as cholera diarrhea, malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Also, the poor people in such areas are prone to tropical diseases which weakens and kills individuals at a fast rate due to poor living conditions and poor health in general. This is why wealthy countries or organizations run by wealthy countries offer relief help and support to such countries and provide them with medicines, better treatments and prevention measures from contracting diseases.

Some preventive measures provided include vaccines for various diseases such as measles, polio, yellow fever, whooping cough, among others. Most countries like Brazil, Nigeria, Yemen, among others, have many individuals who were and still are not given childhood vaccines. This is because some mothers give birth at home using midwives who are older women in their communities to help them while giving birth. This, in turn, leads to no vaccines for the born child. Also, they do not follow up on such matters due to their culture or have been through that a vaccination would cause a lot of money, which they cannot afford to pay for. Hence, the child may be easily attacked by diseases because they were not vaccinated against them. They will be prone to any illness that passes their way because their bodies do not have the proper elements to fight these diseases, even cognitive disorders (Jackson 33). All the parents lack is the proper information about vaccines and what they do to and for the body. Hence this supports the statement that poverty causes poor health.

On the other hand, some individuals support the argument that poverty does not necessarily lead to poor health. It is based on taking care of oneself and acting to improve their lives by looking after their health, watching what they eat and what they consume in their bodies, for example, drugs. Such people may be poor, but they go out of the ordinary to make sure that they will not contract communicable diseases or suffer from poor nutrition or substance abuse based diseases. Health measure begins with oneself; that is, if an individual chooses to live a healthy life, whether poor or wealthy, it would be impossible for their health to be poor and vice versa. It is not that the poor people with poor health do not take care of themselves or families, they have to be more careful in doing certain activities or consuming certain things to eat which they can afford to avoid contracting a disease or deteriorating their health. There are known people who do that, and even if they are poor, they live a healthy life due to how they live or what foods they consume daily. If an individual is unable to afford food or shelter, then they are most likely to have poor health no matter how much they try to live right. Hence, even if the argument is right at some point, it also has a shallow explanation to support its main statement.

Conclusion

My take on this argument is I agree that poverty leads to poor health. Some of these factors of poverty are because of the circumstances that individuals find themselves into like having no money, food, shelter and yet, the individual is doing everything right, but everything seems in vain. Hence, this situation may lead to poor health to the individual due to stress, poor nutrition, staying out in the cold at night leading to them contracting diseases such as pneumonia, or bronchitis. Therefore, even if individuals take care of themselves when in poor conditions, there is always a factor that comes along and turns over an individual's life to the worst by making them suffer a health condition after working hard to maintain their life. Such diseases

may come due to staying in overcrowded places, or drinking dirty water or even eating from the streets with no clue where the food was brought from. If one has to have good health, they should avoid certain things that make it easier for them to contract diseases.

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