

# Determinants of health.

Dr.P.Jayakumar

Assistant Professor

PG & Research Department of Economics

St.Joseph's Collge(Autonomous)

Tiruchirappalli

# Introduction

Many factors combine together to affect the health of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment. To a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on health, whereas the more commonly considered factors such as access and use of health care services often have less of an impact.

# Determinants of health.

**1.Income and social status**

**2.Employment**

**3.Education**

**4.Social environments**

**5.Physical environments**

**6.Healthy child development**

**7.Personal health practices and coping skills**

**8.Health services**

**9.Social support networks**

**10.Biology and genetic endowment**

**11.Gender**

**12.Culture**

- **The determinants of health include:**
- the social and economic environment,
- the physical environment, and
- the person's individual characteristics and behaviours.

- The context of people's lives determine their health, and so blaming individuals for having poor health or crediting them for good health is inappropriate. Individuals are unlikely to be able to directly control many of the determinants of health. These determinants— or things that make people healthy or not— include the above factors, and many others

- Income and social status - higher income and social status are linked to better health. The greater the gap between the richest and poorest people, the greater the differences in health.
- Education – low education levels are linked with poor health, more stress and lower self-confidence

- Physical environment – safe water and clean air, healthy workplaces, safe houses, communities and roads all contribute to good health.
- Employment and working conditions – people in employment are healthier, particularly those who have more control over their working conditions

- Social support networks – greater support from families, friends and communities is linked to better health. Culture - customs and traditions, and the beliefs of the family and community all affect health.
- Genetics - inheritance plays a part in determining lifespan, healthiness and the likelihood of developing certain illnesses. Personal behaviour and coping skills – balanced eating, keeping active, smoking, drinking, and how we deal with life's stresses and challenges all affect health.

- Health services - access and use of services that prevent and treat disease influences health
- Gender - Men and women suffer from different types of diseases at different ages.
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- Steps to improve conditions of health worldwide
- Reducing the health gap in a generation requires that governments build systems that allow a healthy standard of living where no one should fall below due to circumstances beyond his or her control. Social protection schemes can be instrumental in realizing developmental goals rather than being dependent on achieving those goals. They can be effective ways to reduce [poverty](#) and local economies can benefit. [\[51\]](#)

- Policies to reduce [child poverty](#) need to be enacted as an investment in the future of all countries. As a child, when stress levels go up and stay up as a result of constantly having to worry about shelter and food, high hormone levels interfere with the development of brain circuitry and connection causing long term chemical damage.<sup>[52]</sup> Studies showed that the [immune system](#) of participants were stronger if their parents had the security of home ownership while the participants were growing up.

- Policies to reduce child poverty need to be enacted as an investment in the future of all countries. In most rich countries, the relative child poverty rate is 10 percent or less; in the United States, it is 21.9 percent. The lowest poverty rates are more common in smaller well-developed and high-spending welfare states like Sweden and Finland, with about 5 or 6 percent. Middle-level rates are found in major European countries where unemployment compensation is more generous and social policies provide more generous support to single mothers and working women (through paid family leave, for example), and where social assistance minimums are high. For instance, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and Germany have poverty rates that are in the 7 to 8 percent range. [\[53\]](#)

- The Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) in 2005 made recommendations for action to promote health equity based on 3 principles of action: “improve the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age; tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money, and resources, the structural drivers of conditions of daily life, globally, nationally, and locally; and measure the problem, evaluate action, and expand the knowledge base.” [\[54\]](#) These recommendations would involve providing resources such as quality education, decent housing, access to affordable health care, access to healthy food, and safe places to exercise for everyone despite gaps in affluence.

# What is Nutrition? Why is Nutrition Important?

**Nutrition**, nourishment, or aliment, is the supply of materials - food - required by organisms and cells to stay alive. In science and human medicine, nutrition is the science or practice of consuming and utilizing foods.

- In hospitals, nutrition may refer to the food requirements of patients, including nutritional solutions delivered via an IV (intravenous) or IG (intragastic) tube.

- Nutritional science studies how the body breaks food down (catabolism) and repairs and creates cells and tissue (anabolism) - catabolism and anabolism = metabolism. Nutritional science also examines how the body responds to food. In other words, *"nutritional science investigates the metabolic and physiological responses of the body to diet"*.

- Nutrition also focuses on how diseases, conditions and problems can be prevented or lessened with a healthy diet.

Nutrition also involves identifying how certain diseases, conditions or problems may be caused by dietary factors, such as poor diet ([malnutrition](#)), [food allergies](#), metabolic diseases, etc.

# Indicators of HDI

- The **Human Development Index (HDI)** is a composite statistic used to rank countries by level of "[human development](#)", taken as a synonym of the older terms "[standard of living](#)" and/or "[quality of life](#)", and distinguishing "very high human development", "high human development", "medium human development", and "low human development" countries.

**THANKS**