

“Social” Determinants of Health

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Non-Traditional Determinants of Health

↑ing recognition that social or *non-medical* determinants of health are *more important* than *medical* determinants

Yes --- access to medical care is important *but* ... so is income, education, economic opportunities, early childhood development, etc.

WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health

Established by J.W. Lee: 2005 - 2008

20 Commissioners from around the world

- Purpose:* Identify strategies that  health,  health disparities
- Commission visits:* Chile, Egypt, India, Iran, Kenya, Brazil, China, Canada, U.S., Japan
- Observations:* Social determinants are important in *developing* countries but also in *developed* countries

Some of What WHO Commission Learned ...

Life expectancy differences as great in developed world as in developing world

- we know avg. life expectancy at birth in developing world is < developed world, e.g., *37 yrs.* in *Botswana* vs. *79 yrs.* in *Japan*, but ...
- *poorest males* in *Glasgow* have life expectancy of *54 yrs.* vs. *82 yrs.* for *high income males*
- life expectancy of *African-American males* in *DC* is *63 yrs.* vs. *80 yrs.* for *white males* in *Montgomery County*

Major Recommendations of WHO Commission

- ◆ Improve daily living conditions
- ◆ Invest in early childhood development
- ◆ Make sure there are healthy places to live
- ◆ And decent places to work
- ◆ Recognize people need protection thru-out their life

Most important – Consider health effects from *all* legislation – not just health legislation

RWJ Commission to Build Healthy America

9 recommendations/3 categories

- ◆ Promoting early childhood development and health
- ◆ Promoting good nutrition
- ◆ Promoting healthy communities

Underscores notion that reforming healthcare is critical
but ...

Improving health requires improving *social* factors

Wilensky/Satcher Perspective ...

Social determinants focus is especially important for children

- ◆ Many serious medical problems start in childhood
 - ↓ing incidence and prevalence can have big payoffs
- ◆ Nutrition
 - especially during pregnancy/early childhood
- ◆ Education
 - important for early childhood development –
esp. for poor kids
- ◆ ↓ substance abuse