

# Social Conditions As Causes of Disease

Over the last several decades, epidemiological studies have been enormously successful in identifying risk factors for major diseases. However, most of this research has focused attention on risk factors that are relatively proximal causes of disease such as diet, cholesterol level, exercise and the like. We question the emphasis on such individually-based risk factors and think that **greater attention must be paid to basic social conditions if health reform is to have its maximum effect in the time ahead.**

There are two reasons for this claim.

**First** we think that individually-based risk factors must be put in the context, by examining what puts people at risk of risks, if we are to craft effective interventions and improve the nation's health.

**Second**, we think that social factors such as socioeconomic status and social support are likely "fundamental causes" of disease that is because they embody access to important resources, affect multiple disease outcomes through multiple mechanisms, and consequently maintain an association with disease even when intervening mechanisms change.

# MCKEOWN THESIS

states that the enormous increase in population and dramatic improvements in health that humans have experienced over the past 2 centuries owe more to changes in **broad economic and social conditions** than to specific medical advances or public health initiatives.

Our “fundamental social causes” approach • think that, when a population develops the causes to avoid disease and death, individuals' ability to benefit from that causes is shaped by **resources** of knowledge, money, power, prestige, and beneficial social connections. **People who command more of these resources are able to gain a health advantage**

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# Resources are important in 2 ways

**First**, resources directly shape **individual health** • behaviors by influencing whether people know about, have access to, can afford, and are supported in their efforts to engage in health enhancing behaviors.

**Second**, resources shape access to **broad contexts** such as neighborhoods, occupations, and social networks that vary dramatically in associated profiles of risk and protective factors.

There are many **social conditions or behaviors that contribute to diseases** etiology that include:

- 1- Sexual transmitted ,diseases(STDs). AIDS, Gonorrhoea, Hepatitis est.
- 2 -Drug abuse (addiction): morphine, artane, hashish, opium .... etc.
- 3- Alcoholism (alcohol addiction).
- 4- Stressful life events: loss of spouse, close friend
- 5- Socioeconomic status: income, education, and occupation.

# Basic elements of healthy environment:

- 1- Means of communication
- 2- Socialization.
- 3- Professionalism.
- 4- Structure of organization (personnel, materials, policy).
- 5- Job description

# Principles of satisfaction in changing health environment:

- 1- Environment should be favorable
- 2- Social interaction can be created.
- 3 - Effective level relationship can be generated
- 4- Adequate level of care can be presented.
- 5- Resources should be available.
- 6- Self improvement initiated