

Social assessment

social assessment refers to a process in which objective and subjective information are used to identify high-priority problems . Ideally, this process will use a variety of social, economic, and quality-of-life indicators .

There are strong connections between major health • problems (e.g., violence, chronic disease, teen pregnancy) and their social determinants (e.g., cultural differences, variability in levels of income, social support, housing, and education). While these factors tend to cluster within neighborhoods or communities, they vary considerably between communities.

Any social assessment should be designed to •
take these realities into account. Armed with
the information generated from a social
assessment, planners will be in a better
position to tailor interventions to meet the
unique needs of a given community

An epidemiologist, an anthropologist, a health educator, and a layperson are all likely to view a given problem through different lenses. More importantly, each is quite likely to detect a glimpse of reality that the others may miss. The social assessment process will be productive to the extent that:

- (1) it serves as a first step in a planning process •
- (2) it reflects a spirit of inclusion •
- (3) time is dedicated to allow all stakeholders to discuss and interpret information gained in the process •
- (4) those discussions are carried out in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. •

INDICATORS

Among the objective and subjective indicators •
that may be used as a part of social assessment
include

1-perceptions of quality of life •

2-sense of community •

3-perceived functional capacity •

4-employment rates •

5-differences in levels of income •

6-access to transportation and transportation •
services

- 7-alcohol-related auto crashes •
- 8-housing density •
- 9-crime •
- 10-trust or distrust in government •
- 11-air and water quality •
- 12-access to health institutes •
- 13-mental health, and social services •
- 14-education •

A wide range of methods have been used to collect data for social assessments. These include •

1-interviewing 2-community town meetings •

3-focus groups 4-community surveys •

5- archival research 6- reviews of income •

7- housing status 8-access to health . •