Social & Behavioral Epidemiology

Matthew Roach
University of South Florida, College of Public Health

Branches of Epidemiology

• What is social epidemiology?
  — Discipline that studies the “social distribution and social determinants of states of health.”

Branches of Epidemiology (2)

• What is behavioral epidemiology?
  — “The study of the role of behavioral factors in health.”

Implications

• Epidemiological research in public health is useful in the design of interventions that can prevent illness.
• Understanding the risk factors through causal models can help to formulate public health policies that are tailored to the specific needs of various populations.

Key Concepts

• There are 2 key concepts that I will be discussing.
  • Socioeconomic status (SES)
  • Health Disparities

Key Concepts

• Socioeconomic status (SES)
  — Composite measure of a person’s income, education level, and type of occupation.
  — One of the strongest predictors of morbidity and premature mortality
Video
• Please Watch
• After you are done, proceed to the next slide.
• http://video.who.int/streaming/chronicdiseases/Mariam%27s_Journey.wmv

• Health Disparities
  – Differences in the occurrence of diseases and adverse health conditions in the population.

How does SES affect health?
• Limited Resources
• Psychosocial Stress
• Access To Care
• Health Behavior

Stress
• Stress- “physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation.”
• Social Support- “help from others while under stress”

Key Variables
• Predictor Variables
  – Socio/demographic characteristics
  – Behavioral Patterns
  – Social Environment Factors

Key Variables (2)
• Outcome Variables
  – Morbidity (sickness)
  – Mortality
  – Incidence
  – Prevalence
  – Life Expectancy
Summary

• SES
• Health Disparities
• Social Epidemiology
• Behavioral Epidemiology
• Stress