Introduction to Community Health
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Learning Objectives
• Understand the definition of health
• Identify some of the main public health achievements over the past century
• Explain the difference between individual health and community health
• Understand community health through a applied obesity example

Outline
• Definition of Health
• Definition of Community Health
• Major public health influences on community health
• What impacts Community Health
• Applied Example
Definition of Health

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity”

(WHO, 1948)

• Apply to community level
What is Community Health?

“The health status of a defined group of people and the actions and conditions to promote, protect, and preserve their health.”

What makes a community healthy?

• Healthy Community
  – ability to assess own needs and resources,
  – infrastructure and policies that support health,
  – essential public health services are accessible (e.g., quality health care)

Major Public Health Events – Community Health

• 1796: Smallpox vaccine
• 1854: Broad street water pump handle removed
  – decrease spread of Cholera
• 1902: First national level health agency
• 1911: First local health department
• 1965: Medicare and Medicaid bills passed
• 1979: first “Healthy People” published
Shift in Causes of Death

- Birth Related Complications
- Chronic Conditions
- Communicable Diseases

What impacts the health of a community?

- The individuals within the community
- The interactions between those individuals
- The physical and social environment
- The organization of the community

What impacts the health of a community?
What impacts the health of a community?

Rules and policies

SPEED LIMIT 55

Community Health Activities

Community Health Activities

Thinking about your community

Your Turn! How healthy is your community?
Name a few things that your community has that help community residents be healthy.
Thinking about your community

- Think about your community
  - How do the people around you influence your physical activity and eating habits?
  - How does your access to safe walking or biking areas impact your physical activity?
  - Access to resources (e.g., rec center on campus), safe travel to your workplace?
  - What food choices are available to you in your community?
  - Access to health insurance, doctors offices?

Applied Example: Obesity

- Obesity is a significant public health problem
- Where will we be in 2020?

Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overweight</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Obesity</th>
<th>Very obese</th>
<th>Morbid obesity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2008</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NHANES, 1999-2000, 2005-2008

Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Obesity Prevention

- Many programs to help combat obesity
- Some of the most successful have been community-level programs
- How is one’s community involved in prevention of obesity?
Factors Influencing Community Level Obesity Programs

- Behaviors of individual community members
- Peer/community social influence
- Community physical environment
- Policies and regulations

Example Community Strategies

CDC recommends that communities should:
- Improve Availability of Affordable Healthier Food and Beverage Choices in Public Service Venues
- Institute Smaller Portion Size Options in Public Service Venues
- Improve Geographic Availability of Supermarkets in Underserved Areas
- Incentivize Purchasing Foods from Farms
- Increase Support for Breastfeeding
- Increase Opportunities for Extracurricular Physical Activity
- Require physical education in schools

Example Program:
Shape Up Somerville: EatSmart PlayHard

- Public school grades 1-3
- Changes:
  - Overhaul lunch menus in the school
  - Nutrition education curriculum in schools
  - Physical activity programs (in- and after-school)
  - Improve local restaurant menu offerings
- Results: over 2 years, schoolchildren in Somerville, Massachusetts gained less weight, less likely to be obese or overweight compared to control communities
What can you do to help make your community happier and healthier?

References


