

Chapter 39

The Assessment of Actions of the Environment and the Impact of Preventive Medicine for Public Health in Poland

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes how the actions of the medical environment is aiming to improve the health of society can and must be seen on many levels. The author refers to the organizational, ethical, legal and psychological aspects. Also covered are not only patients' education, but also the scope of functioning healthcare organization, which adapts to the needs of the changing environment e.g. requirements of the patient, the development of technology, advances in medicine. Public health problems appear as complex components of the system and cannot be dealt with by a single, simple intervention, whether perceived by the prism of a single feature or element, but must be perceived as influencing factors in the system e.g. several attributes, factors. These together may potentially be used in the future to generate better health outcomes or the functioning of the entire health system in the areas of health sciences, medicine or public health.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, most health problems occur due to the consequences of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, allergies and metabolic disorders. The search for new, more effective methods of solving health problems of the population initiated the creation of a new pro-health movement, as well as contributed to the recognition of the need to take multi-level measures to improve the social, economic and political conditions. This approach resulted in the development of a better health education for the patient on one hand, and the actions taken by organizations and institutions in order to improve healthcare and ensure the “normal” functioning of the society in the event of its loss on the other.

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It should be noted that the four models of health (clinical, of social roles, adaptive and self-fulfillment), currently existing in the literature, also point to the fact that the currently occurring issues should be considered comprehensively as a whole. Taking into account the issues discussed the definition of health presented here is the one that, is useful in practical use, because of the possibility of relating it to a large group of people who have a history of greater or lesser impairment of health. According to this definition, “health is the ability and willingness of each part of the human body to fulfill, in the normal conditions of micro and macro environment, all the common tasks with sufficient capacity.” In the literature, we can find differences in interpretation of health determinants. In this case, there is also an ambiguity as to their determination. However, the most common health determinants by WHO include: lifestyle, genetic and biological factors, environmental (physical and psychosocial), economic, demographic, cultural, political, ecological and social factors types of individual behavior and organization of health care.

Adoption of the health definition and determinants presented above allows for an in-depth understanding of the issue, and will also systematize the existing knowledge about the determinants of health in the light of the study.

The issue of health and its determinants, as well as environmental activities in this field has become the subject of my particular interests, resulting in multi-layered analyzes, the results which were published in the international literature.

Undoubtedly the factors in determining the health of the population are: lifestyle, individual choices and behaviors and health care organization. Individual behaviors such as:

- Sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical activity (Central Statistical Office in Poland, 2015; The National Program, 2015; French, 2005; Sallis & Glanz, 2009)
- Increased consumption of easily accessible and high in calories snacks, (mass- produced junk food) (Central Statistical Office in Poland, 2015; The National Program, 2015; Duffey & Popkin, 2011; Jahns et al., 2001; Zizza et al., 2001; Piernas & Popkin, 2011; Young & Nestle, 2002; Young & Nestle, 2003),

are considered risk behaviors. The processes of globalization, is not only responsible for the change in lifestyles, but also contributes to the development of many diseases including obesity, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases and diabetes. These problems concern equally Polish and European society which means that from the point of view of public health, it is important to know the activities of the environment taken to improve public health.

Although it is important for public health policy to be guided by evidence, if this evidence predominantly supports individual-level interventions that have minimal reach and effect across populations, the benefits of being informed by the existing evidence base might be illusory (Parkhurst & Abeyasinghe, 2016). Experience from Poland and other European countries shows, that research on systems needs to provide policy makers and practitioners with robust and relevant evidence that takes adequate account of the real-world circumstances in which people live, policies are made, and interventions are implemented (Rutter et al., 2017; Academy of Medical Sciences, 2016). A complex systems approach uses a broad spectrum of methods to design, implement, and evaluate interventions for changing these systems to improve public health (Diez Roux, 2011). Assessment and describing emergency the properties of a complex system that cannot be directly predicted from the elements within it and are more than just the sum of its parts. For example, the changing distribution of obesity across the population can be conceptualised as an emergent property of the food, employment, transport, economic, and other systems

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