

# Sociological Perspective of Health, Illness and Healing (Part 3)

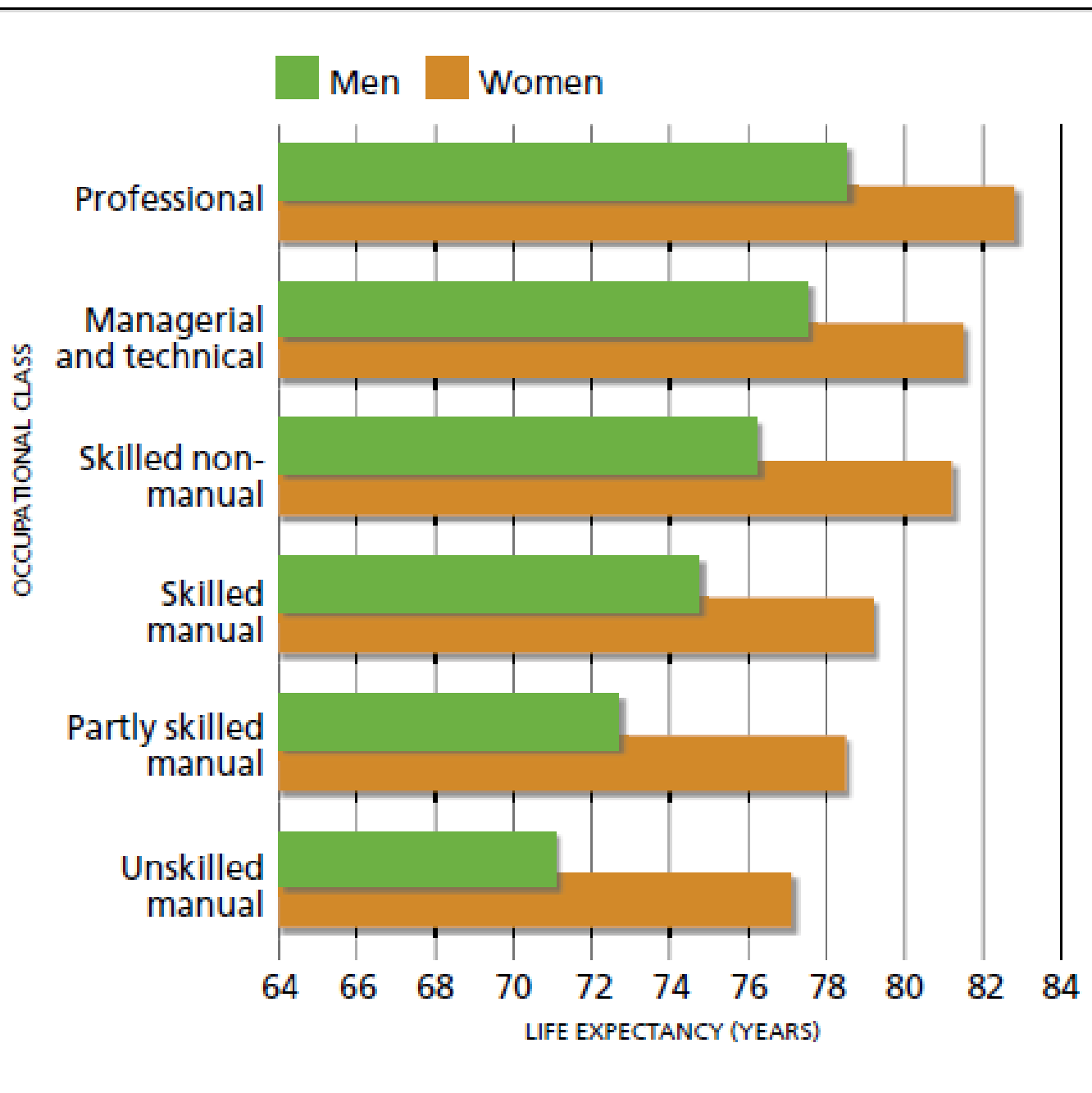
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# Social Determinants of Health<sup>16</sup>

## 1. The Social Gradient

- Even in the most affluent countries, people who are less well off have substantially shorter life expectancies and more illnesses than the rich.
- Poor social and economic circumstances affect health throughout life
- People down the social ladder usually run at least twice the risk of serious illness and premature death as those near the top

# Occupational class differences life expectancy, England and Wales, 1997–1999



# Social Determinants of Health

## 2. Stress

- Stressful circumstances, making people feel worried, anxious and unable to cope, are damaging to health and may lead to premature death.
- Social and psychological circumstances causes long-term stress.
  - **Stress elements that affect health are:**
    - Continuing anxiety,
    - insecurity,
    - low self-esteem,
    - social isolation and
    - lack of control over work and home life, have powerful effects on health.

# Social Determinants of Health

## 3. Early Life

- A good start in life means supporting mothers and young children:
  - the health impact of early development and education lasts a lifetime
- The foundations of adult health are laid in early childhood and before birth.
- Slow growth and poor emotional support raise the lifetime risk of poor physical health and
  - reduce physical, cognitive and emotional functioning in adulthood

# Social Determinants of Health

## 4. Social Exclusion

- Life is short where its quality is poor.
  - By causing hardship and resentment, poverty, social exclusion and discrimination cost lives.
- Poverty, relative deprivation and social exclusion have a major impact on health and premature death,
- The chances of living in poverty are loaded heavily against some social groups

# Social Determinants of Health

## 5. Work

- Stress in the workplace increases the risk of disease.
- People who have more control over their work have better health
- In general, having a job is better for health than having no job.
- But the social organization of work, management styles and social relationships in the workplace all matter for health
- Evidence shows that stress at work plays an important role in contributing to the large social status differences in health, sickness absence and premature death.

# Social Determinants of Health

## 6. Unemployment

- Job security increases health, well-being and job satisfaction.
- Higher rates of unemployment cause more illness and premature death
- Unemployment puts health at risk,
  - the risk is higher in regions where unemployment is widespread.
- Evidence shows that,
  - a substantially increased risk of premature death amongst unemployed people and their families



# Social Determinants of Health

## 7. Social Support

- Positive impact on health are influenced by
  - Friendship, good social relations and strong supportive networks improve health at home, at work and in the community.
- Social support and good social relations are essential to make an important contribution to health.
- Social support helps give people the emotional and practical resources they need.
- Belonging to a social network of communication and mutual obligation makes people feel cared for, loved, esteemed and valued

# Social Determinants of Health

## 8. Addiction

- Some people become addicted to alcohol, drugs and tobacco
  - They suffer from ill effects their use,
- The use of addictive substances is influenced by the wider social setting.
- Drug use is a response to social breakdown
- This is also an important factor in worsening the resulting inequalities in health.
- People resort to it to escape from the reality and difficulties of life

# Social Determinants of Health

## 9. Food

- Food supply is controlled by global market forces
- Therefore healthy food supply is a political issue
- A good diet and adequate food supply are central for promoting health and well-being.
- A shortage of food and lack of variety cause malnutrition and deficiency diseases.
- Excess intake (also a form of malnutrition) contributes to cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, degenerative eye diseases, obesity and dental caries.

# Social Determinants of Health

## 10.Transport

- Healthy transport means less driving and more walking and cycling, backed up by better public transport.
- Cycling, walking and the use of public transport promote health in four ways.
  - they provide exercise,
  - reduce fatal accidents,
  - increase social contact and
  - reduce air pollution

# Healing<sup>17</sup>

- Diseases and injuries are as old as the mankind.
- Even the early man needed care, cure and healing
- Over the centuries, by sheer observation, some healing arts were developed
- There are many forms of healing and therapeutic techniques
- Many cultures developed their own healing arts
- Some of these are still persisting today

# Healing

- Healing and models of healthcare have manifested in many ways
- The concepts that exist today are:
  - The concept of “life force” illness and healing
  - Magico-Religious concepts of illness and Healing
  - The naturalistic concept of illness and healing
  - Vitalistic concept of illness and healing
  - Mechanistic concept of health and illness
  - Concept of energy healing

# Healing

- **Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)**
  - The concept of health and healing is multifaceted
  - During the last 15 to 20 years there is a dramatic use of CAM
  - In India, about 10 % of health consumers use alternative form of medicine
  - Even the Government through NRHM supports use of AYUSH
    - This is an alternative medicine

# Healing

- CAM services are used widely
  - Even the same patient may utilise the services of practitioners of different systems
- Therefore, the health professionals should be aware of and should be able to appreciate different traditions of healing.
- Understanding is required at three levels:
- First:
  - It is necessary to recognize and respect the philosophical approaches of other methods of healing
  - To understand a patient in totality such as body, mind and belief is necessary to be able to provide holistic care



# Healing

- **Second**

- It is important to understand

- how different healing approaches and therapies interact and
    - whether, and under what circumstances, their combined use is helpful or problematic

- **Third**

- A new approach to delivering health care is evolving

- This is known as integrative medicine

- This is developing from convergence of conventional and alternative modalities of healing

- Understanding these different modalities is the first step to understanding the paths that health care may be taking

# Healing

- It is important to understand
  - The historical and cultural roots of the belief underlying different models of care and how these beliefs have shaped contemporary healing models
  - Evolution of dominant biomedical model in contemporary healthcare
  - The emerging integrative model of care and its potential for bringing together diverse healing methods
- How health beliefs affect outcome is not well-defined
- But health beliefs influence health-related behaviours

# Healing

- There are many fundamental concepts of healing
- These concepts have given rise to many models of healing
- Some of these concepts are:
- The concept of “life force”
  - Many ancient cultures subscribed to the belief of life forces
  - Some healing cultures such as reiki, homeopathy and native American medicine are based on this
  - It proposes that human mind, spirit, and body function inseparably and purposefully together in interaction with the environment

# Healing

- **Medico-religious concepts of illness and healing**
  - In this concept, illness is considered a curse, a bad luck, or an affliction brought on by a deity, the life force, an evil spirit, or a magical event
  - In India, small pox was considered as inflicted by angry Sitala maata, some illnesses such as epilepsy are considered as due to an evil spirit

# Healing

- Illness may be perceived as the result of the individual's or groups transgressions, sins, or lack of adherence to religious norms
- Magico-religious healers have included shamans, high priests and faith healers
- The concept of “Ojha” for healing the effect of ill spirit is well known even today
- Healing by prayer or “havan” is practiced in India

# Healing

- **Naturalistic concept of illness and health**
  - In this concept it is believed that the world is a dynamically balanced eco system
    - In this eco system, animate and inanimate are interactive and interdependent
    - Health is a balance in life, balanced internal body system and balance with nature
    - Illness is the result of of imbalance of body elements

# Healing

- Several healing systems are based on this naturalistic concepts
- Some of these systems are:
  - **Ayurvedic medicine**
    - This is a traditional Indian system
    - Illness is caused imbalance between various “doshas”
    - These “doshas” are Pitta, Kapha and Vata

# Healing

- **Greek and Roman medicine**
  - Through the teaching of Pythagoras and Hippocrates evolved the concept of the four humors
  - These are earth (dry, blood), air (cold, phlegm), fire (hot, yellow bile), and water (wet, black bile)
  - These humors in various combinations were thought to be the essential components of all substances
  - Imbalance in any combination of the humors could cause disease
  - The disease is exhibited by various body reactions
  - Healing occurred through discharges of fluids (sputum, pus, blood)



# Healing

- **Traditional Chinese medicine**

- Philosophy of health and disease in China was based on the Tao
- Tao meant living in balance with moderation, equilibrium, equanimity, and proper conduct
- The human body was believed to have an internal life force
- This is qi
- The nature was in dynamic balance through duality of “yang” and “yin”
- Yang means the active, warm, dry, light, positive, masculine principle
- Yin is the cold, wet, dark, negative, feminine principle

# Healing

- Treatment involves various methods to restore balance
- The Nei Ching (oldest known medical books) lists five methods of treatment
- The first method cures the spirit
- The second gives knowledge on how to nourish the body
- The third teaches the true effects of medicine
- The fourth explains acupuncture
- The fifth gives instruction on how to examine and treat bowels and viscera and the breath
- Traditional Chinese medicine is widely practiced today in China

# Healing

- **The vitalistic concept of illness and health**
  - A specific concept of vitalism emerged in Europe in 18<sup>th</sup> century
  - This force was called “the anima” or soul
  - This force regulated body secretions and transmitted its powers through nerve and muscle fibres as “nervous energy”
  - From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onward, a variety of new approaches to illness and health based on vitalism appeared in Europe
  - These were based on the concept of assisting the body in self healing

# Healing

- **Mechanistic/reductionist concepts of health and illness**
  - Asclepiades in 120 BC proposed that living organisms were made up of tiny discrete particles
  - These particles interacted
  - This was called “structural atomism”
  - Disease was thought to result from atomic dysfunction
  - The idea was not very popular till 17<sup>th</sup> century
  - Descartes expounded the concept of “man as machine”

# Healing

- **The concept of energy healing**
  - The concept of energy healing is a modern version of ancient “vital force” concept
  - It recognises that various forms of energy have potential healing effects
  - Such forms include light, heat, vibration, and motion, elasticity, sound, biochemical reactions, electricity, and electromagnetic and other forms of radiation

# Healing

- All living organism use and emit energy
- All inanimate objects forms an electromagnetic system subject to energy transfer within and between systems
- Proponents of energy healing believe that these electromagnetic forces are the key organising factors in living structures
- Other forms of energy such as biological, physical, and biochemical processes are expressions of the energy that sustains life
- The concept of energy healing, as utilised in integrative therapisis based on some principles as below:

# Healing

- Energy flow is the basis of biological system
- Mind, consciousness and body are completely integrated
- Causality of illness is most often subtle
- The whole range of energy system within the human body are normally in balance
  - But are sensitive to change when one energy system become disturbed
- This concept of healing is supported by mind-body medicine
- Evidence supports that that psychosocial factors and behavioral disposition can affect physiological function.

# Healing

- Randomised trials and meta analyses support that many energy healing techniques are effective
- Such therapies include:
  - relaxation,
  - meditation,
  - imagery,
  - hypnosis,
  - biofeedback,
  - yoga, and
  - distant healing



# Healing

- The term “complementary and alternative medicine” includes therapies that vary widely in terms of mode of action, philosophy, technique, and application.
- Many of these systems of care share the fundamental belief that the key to healing is to help the body heal itself, rather than using “outside-in” interventions
- Ayurveda and Chinese medicine share this view of healing

# Healing

- A new model of care is emerging
  - There are hospitals, clinics, practitioners offering an integrated model of care
  - The principal characteristics shared by integrated care models include:
    - acceptance of the biomedical commitment to scientifically based medicine along with a holistic approach to patient care.

**TABLE 3**  
**HEALING CONCEPTS & MODELS OF CARE**  
**IN THE UNITED STATES**

**CONVENTIONAL BIOMEDICAL MODELS OF CARE**

<b>MECHANISTIC</b> Disease-centered	<b>BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL</b> Context-centered	<b>HUMANISTIC</b> Patient-centered
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**COMPLEMENTARY & ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF CARE**

<b>HOLISTIC/NATURALISTIC</b> Patient-centered/ Self-healing-centered	<b>MAGICO-RELIGIOUS</b> External diety or life force Faith- & healer-centered	<b>ENERGETIC</b> Biofield balance Modality-focused
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**INTEGRATED MODELS OF CARE**

**HOLISTIC/SCIENTIFIC**  
 Foundation in science-based biomedicine  
 Embrace holistic elements

# Healing

- **Conclusion**

- In the present society many forms of healing art are available
- Patients now have a wide variety of choice
- Many patients now explore various models of care depending on their illness, belief, experience, personalities and ability and also economic status
- In India about 8-10% of population both in rural and urban areas avail alternative form of care

# Healing

- Government of India actively support AYUSH form of care
- There is a Directorate of AYUSH in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- However, the political and economic dominance of biomedical model and cultural predisposition, the aura of bio-medicine, the social status of the bio-medicine practitioners in the society present a major barrier to the alternative form of medicine
- It is not permissible for the practitioner of one system to practice simultaneously another system of care

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**Thank you**