

HEALTH- Definition, concept,
Dimensions, determinants

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 1946)

- Saracchi defines health as “a condition of well being, free of disease or infirmity, and a basic and universal human right”

- Bircher (6) defines health as “a dynamic state of well-being characterized by a physical and mental potential, which satisfies the demands of life commensurate with age, culture, and personal responsibility”

- Health can be seen as a multifaceted dimension of human life, and as a 'reserve stock' (Blaxter 2003, 2004) of vitality, fitness and strength (whether psychological or physical or both) which individuals can draw upon to pursue their goals and actions.

- “Health is the extent to which an individual or a group is able to realize aspirations and satisfy needs and change or cope with the environment.” (WHO, 1984)

DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH

PHYSICAL dimension of health

- physical functioning
- Health-related limitations in these activities are easily verified and directly interpretable
- Its measurements:
 - physical limitations
 - physical abilities, e.g., ability to perform everyday activities, independence in bathing, dressing, able to walk upstairs or unable to walk without assistance
 - symptoms, e.g., cough, shortness of breath, chronic pain: intensity, duration and frequency of pain during a specified time etc.

MENTAL dimension of health

- Whereas physical functioning is manifested in behavioral performance, mental health encompasses feeling that cannot be observed.
- *Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.*
- Assessment of general mental health requires measures of psychological states e.g. self reports of the frequency and intensity of psychological distress and well-being during specified period:
 - anxiety, depression, nervousness, downheartedness
 - satisfying life, feel cheerful
 - emotional and behavioral control, feeling emotionally stable, feeling of worth of living

SOCIAL dimension of health

- social well-being and social functioning
- Includes social contacts and social resources.
- More heterogeneous than the physical and mental dimensions of health, one kind of social circumstances does not predict well another kind of social circumstance.