



Summary

To describe health as the absence of disease is inadequate and unsatisfying. The state of 'health' implies that all natural processes that support life are functioning at an optimal level in their intended alignment. The different components like physical, emotional, mental and spiritual can be considered as spectrum of health. Besides, a person who enjoys health with these components is said to be in a state of positive health. A society's understanding of the determinants of health has an important influence on the strategies it uses to maintain and improve the health of its population. In order to improve population health status and reduce health inequalities, it is important to identify and understand the main factors that protect and promote good health. These factors are known as the determinants of health. Thus, the familiar model developed by Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) neatly summarizes the determinants of health. They talk of the layers of influence on health. They describe a social ecological theory to health. They attempt to map the relationship between the individual, their environment and disease. Keeping in view, the model comprises the following as the determinants of health viz. early childhood development, physical environment, income, education, unemployment and working conditions, food insecurity, housing, social status and social exclusion, health services, culture, gender, social support networks and genetics. Whether a person is healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment. A person is said to be healthy as a whole when the body, mind and soul work together as a system with each part. Individual lifestyle factors such as diet, smoking and alcohol, physical activity and sexual behaviour are also responsible for a person's health. A clean and safe environment, adequate income, meaningful roles in society, good housing, population-based services and utilities, affordable nutritious food, education and social support within communities all contribute towards good health. Therefore, a holistic approach comprising physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual states is considered to be more effective and improves a person's overall quality of life.

