Biomedical Model of Health

Dominance of medical science

- In 1950’s & 60’s, greater interest in disease caused Australia’s Health policy centered on curative and restorative medicine
- Treatment now involves skilled diagnosis and the use of expensive medical technology, which causes strain on the financial side of the health system

Example- Improved medical technologies like M.I.R machines can better diagnosis disease or injury, increasing life expectancy for the individual.

Biomedical Model of Health

Advantages & Disadvantages of the Biomedical approach to health

Advantages
- It creates advances in technology and research
- It enables many common problems to be effectively treated
- It extends life expectancy
- Improves quality of life

Disadvantages
- It relies on professional health workers and technology and is therefore costly
- It doesn’t always promote good health and wellbeing
- Not every condition can be treated
- Affordability
Biomedical Model of Health

*Referred to as the ‘band aid’ or ‘quick fix’ approach*

- Focuses on the physical or biological aspects of disease or ill
- It involves diagnosing and treating illness and condition once symptoms are present in order to return individuals to the pre-illness state allow them to get back to work or school
- Not centered around addressing the causes or reasons for the illness and treatments are seen as the ‘solution’

The most obvious example of this is a doctor prescribing a patient antibiotics to get over an illness, it treats the individual and returns them to their pre-illness state but DOES NOT take into consideration the cause or reasons for illness whatever.

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Biomedical Model of Health

*Advances in the Biomedical approach - CARDIOVASCULAR*

- Introduction of the sphygmomanometer and stethoscope in 1910 enabled doctors to measure blood pressure
- New X-rays introduced in 1941 allowed doctors to view the action of the heart
  - these allowed doctors to better diagnose cardiovascular problems but they were still unable to treat them.
- Heart-lung bypass machines allowed surgeons more time to tackle more complex procedures
- These advances along with the development of hypertensive drugs improved individuals lives, decreased mortality and morbidity by allowing diagnosis and treatment; still NOT addressing the cause.

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Biomedical Model of Health

*Advances in Medical Technology*

- After world war 2 there was a discovery of antibiotics.
- This contributed in a further reduction of infectious diseases such as pneumonia, venereal disease and syphilis.
- The discovery of penicillin as a form of antibiotic was important in reducing morbidity and mortality rates associated with infections.
- Applied knowledge; Doctors were able to prescribe this newly found antibiotic to pregnant women (a reduction in maternal mortality was seen at this time) to treat infection. Therefore reducing mortality rate.
- Diagnosis, treatment, increased health status. Do not address the cause.