Socio-economic influences on health status
The wealthier you are, the healthier you are?
Jeff vs Chad

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_11xLlwKgWc
Definition

*Socioeconomic status:*
Sometimes referred to as ‘social class’, SES represents how individuals and groups are ‘placed’ in a society based on the following measures:

• Income
• Education level
• Employment status
• Occupation and working conditions
• Wealth
• Housing
Low socioeconomic groups are at risk of:

- Lower health status
- Shorter life expectancy
- Higher morbidity (including disability) and mortality
- Lower quality of life

**FACT:** In Australia, 19% of the mortality burden for males and 12% for females has been associated with socioeconomic disadvantage. (AIHW, 2004)
Characteristics
Low SES groups experience the following:

- Higher rates of morbidity
- Higher rates of mortality across nearly all causes of death, and more avoidable deaths
- Higher rates of hospitalisation, disability and infant mortality rates
- Increased mental and behavioural problems, as well as rates of suicide (both men and women)
Characteristics cont ...

- Higher rates of cancers overall, higher rates of lung cancer
- Increased rate of CHD and stroke
- Increased rate of respiratory disorders
- Increased morbidity and mortality associated with motor vehicle accidents

Image source: flickr.com
Characteristics cont...

Individuals with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to:

- Smoke regularly
- Be less physically active
- Be overweight or obese
- Drink alcohol at harmful doses
- Have a poorer diet
- Consult doctors less often
- Use preventative health care less often

Image source: flickr.com
Characteristics – Effects on Children

- Children in single parent families have poorer health than children in 2-parent families.
- This is attributed to single parent families having a lower than average income and more unemployment than 2-parent families.
Characteristics – Effects on Children

- Children living in families with reduced income are at risk of poor health.

- Living on a low income can affect a child’s:
  - Nutrition
  - Access to medical care
  - Environmental safety
  - Quality and stability of their care
  - Provision of appropriate housing
  - Heating
  - Clothing
Characteristics – Effects on Children

Primary concern for economically disadvantaged children:

- Being excluded from activities that other children are able to participate in.

- This exclusion can lead to a sense of isolation and may impact on both social and mental health.
Characteristics – Effects on Children

Smith Family Appeal
Sociocultural factors

- Lower levels of education are a main cause of poor health status ....
- Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs are impacted by poor education
- Less income is available for medical care not covered by Medicare

Image source: ci.huntingtonbeach.ca.us
Biological factors

Biological determinants also influence the health of lower socioeconomic status groups.

These groups are found to more likely:

- To be overweight or obese
- To have raised blood pressure
Prevalence of overweight and Obese by SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socioeconomic group</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 (highest SES)</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group 5: lowest socioeconomic status
Group 4: Socioeconomic status
Group 3: Socioeconomic status
Group 2: Socioeconomic status
Group 1: highest socioeconomic status
Environmental factors

- A range of environmental factors influence the variations in health status between high and low socioeconomic groups, including geographic location, housing, and the work environment.
High SES

People from HSES:

• More likely to be educated to high levels

• Therefore have better access to highly paid occupations

• This increases resources and opportunities
High SES

People from HSES:

• Parents and families expectations eg, to go to university

• People from HSES can generally afford university costs (full fee paying).

• *Think about America where families have to take out student loans, no access to HECS/HELP*
High SES

Education:

• Knowledge of healthy foods and preparation methods

• Able to purchase more expensive fresh foods, fish, etc

• See link between making healthy foods choices and maintaining better quality of life compared to cheap, convenience option (e.g. frozen fish fingers and chips) which have little to no nutritional value.
High SES

Housing:
• Think about access to private nursing homes – when such large demand as population ages

• HSES able to afford private health insurance to get seen to quicker and choice of specialist
Environmental factors

Activity: Using google maps, look at different suburbs and the proximity of fast food chains – pay attention to differences between high and low SES areas!
Environmental factors

**Activity:** Using google maps, look at different suburbs and the proximity of fast food chains – pay attention to differences between high and low SES areas!

Now Complete question 9 from 3.1.5