



Health for All Now!
People's Health Movement



Sheet 5: Determinants of health

Health before profit Let's change Europe!

We want a Europe that's proactive on social, environmental and gender determinants...

For our health, enhance social, environmental, ecological, and gender determinants

The determinants of health

Many interrelated factors influence health: age, gender, socio-economic class, education, housing, employment status, working conditions and diet.

These are collectively known as 'social determinants of health' (see illustration). Their impact on a population's health surpasses that of healthcare itself.



Inequalities exacerbate health risks.

The less financially equipped you are to pay for health services, the more likely you are to need them at some point of your life.



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The economic and political system defines the conditions for improving social determinants of health, including through environmental and housing policies, food and drug prices, and access to water.

To achieve a structural solution, we need to focus not only on the factors that have a direct impact on health but also on the processes that determine the unequal distribution of good health in society.

In other words, to achieve good health, we need to fight for the right to employment, decent income, housing, access clean water, energy, gender equity - with a specific focus on all aspects of women's health - education, culture, clean air, nutrition, a preserved natural environment, and regulations safeguarding workers' health.

Recently, our societies have had to cope with several crises that have highlighted and accentuated the vulnerability of specific populations and the systems in place:

The Covid-19 crisis:

- Revealed the vulnerability of public health systems undermined by years of austerity
- Accentuated social inequities in terms of prevention and treatment
- Worsened working conditions and the conditions in which people receive care
- ...

The economic crisis, with its rise in inflation, has led to a relative fall in salaries. This makes it more difficult for people to access:

- Healthcare
- Housing
- A nutritious diet
- Water
- ...

A social crisis caused by:

- Obstacles in accessing abortion care in some countries
- Worsening retirement conditions
- The tightening of unemployment benefit conditions
- The revelation of health scandals, particularly in elder care
- ...



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Our priorities

There is an urgent need to recognise the interconnections between environmental protection, the economic system, and social justice in our societies.

The EU has a central role to play in improving health by tackling root causes such as the social, environmental, ecological, and gender determinants of health.

- The EU and its Member States must put in place a cross-sectoral approach to policies by assessing the health consequences of each decision in all sectors, in line with the WHO's "health in all policies"¹ recommendations.
- We must reaffirm our opposition to the financialization and commodification of health. People are not commodities.

¹ https://www.who.int/social_determinants/french_adelaide_statement_for_web.pdf
https://www.who.int/social_determinants/hiap_statement_who_sa_final.pdf