

**Social class and its influence on health**

Variations in health and wellbeing are significantly influenced by social and economic inequality. White stated that the most significant materialist influences on health are:

1. Diet and housing: People on lower incomes buy goods that negatively affect their health. Poor diet, often portrayed as the result of a lack of education, is often the result of a lack of money to buy nutritious food. Poorer housing increases the risk of accidents due to overcrowding and unsafe conditions, while damp, poor air quality leads to a higher risk of respiratory problems.
2. Working conditions: For example, back pain, asbestosis and silicosis, and affect of white-collar roles expose workers to greater risk of repetitive strain injury and sedentary conditions. Occupation can also affect the mental health of different groups in different ways.
3. The urban environment: The affluence or poverty of an urban area influences the availability of public services, housing conditions, pollution levels, crime rates and the quality of private sector enterprises in terms of the goods and services provided.
4. Free from excess noise and pollution, Architecturally designed to support activities such as walking and cycling, Planned to provide services that allow social interaction, improving social cohesion; Designed to encourage the establishment of businesses providing healthier services and goods.
5. The provision -or lack- of public services, those on the lowest income are likely to be most adversely affected by lack of public services.

More equal and healthier: it is increasingly argued that health inequalities are not just related to level of income, but that large inequalities of wealth within society in general have a negative effect on health. This can have potentially adverse effects on individuals’ health. The social gradient of health is influenced by the existence of relative deprivation.

This lead to demonstrating envy and mistrust towards others, reducing social cohesion and having negative consequences, in particular on mental wellbeing and happiness.

If health inequalities are to be seriously reduced, society must invest in individuals and environments where deprivation, poverty and economic insecurity are common. The society that values materialist acquisitions as representations of success breeds divisio. It could be argued that a healthy society is one built on equality, social justice and social cohesion.