

# Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

## Income & Wealth

“More income increases access to nutritious food and other health-promoting goods and services, and can reduce stress by making it easier to cope with daily challenges. More income can buy the ability to live in a safe neighborhood with good public schools or send children to private schools. This can affect a child’s ultimate educational attainment, which in turns shapes job prospects and thus income levels in adulthood.”

*(Braveman and Egerter, 2013)*

## Housing

Housing plays a key role in health, from its quality and condition to its cost. Poor quality housing can cause illnesses, for example respiratory illness caused by exposure to moldy housing. The cost of housing can also affect health, introducing additional stress when housing costs are unaffordable.

## Social Inclusion/Exclusion

“Social exclusion results from racism, discrimination, stigmatization, hostility and unemployment. These processes prevent people from participating in education or training, and gaining access to services and citizenship activities. They are socially and psychologically damaging, materially costly, and harmful to health. People who live in, or have left, institutions, such as prisons, children’s homes and psychiatric hospitals, are particularly vulnerable.”

*(Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003)*

## Work

“Stress in the workplace increases the risk of disease. People who have more control over their work have better health.”

*(Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003)*

## Incarceration

“Incarceration has harmful effects for the incarcerated, and mass incarceration contaminates the communities where it is geographically concentrated. Incarceration influences the health and health behaviors of the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated—including exposure to infectious diseases, stress, and violent victimization—and health service utilization both during and after incarceration.”

*(Nowotny and Kuptsevych-Timmer, 2017)*

## Early Life

“A good start in life means supporting mothers and young children: the health impact of early development and education lasts a lifetime. The foundations of adult health are laid in early childhood and before birth.”

*(Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003)*

## Stress

“Neuroscientists have identified physiologic mechanisms that can explain how chronic stress—such as stress associated with long-term economic hardship or family trauma—can get into the body to impair health. Chronic stress during childhood appears to have particularly profound and enduring adverse effects on health throughout life.

*(Braveman and Egerter, 2013)*

## Racial or Ethnic Group

“Racial or ethnic differences in health can be explained in part by socioeconomic disadvantages that are the persistent legacy of discrimination. Chronic stress related to experiences of racial bias may also contribute to ill health—even without overt incidents of discrimination, and even among affluent and highly educated people of color.”

*(Braveman and Egerter, 2013)*

## Social Support

“Friendship, good social relations and strong supportive networks improve health at home, at work and in the community.”

*(Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003)*

## Transportation

“Healthy transport means less driving and more walking and cycling, backed up by better public transport. Cycling, walking and the use of public transportation promote health in four ways. They provide exercise, reduce fatal accidents, increase social contact and reduce air pollution.”

*(Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003)*

## Neighborhood/ Physical Environment

“Health and health-related behaviors have been linked with a range of neighborhood features, including: the concentration of poverty; the density of convenience stores, liquor stores, and fast-food restaurants relative to grocery stores selling fresh foods; access to transportation; the condition of buildings; and the presence of sidewalks and places to play or exercise.”

*(Braveman and Egerter, 2013)*

## Unemployment

“Job security increases health, wellbeing and job satisfaction. Higher rates of unemployment cause more illness and premature death.”

*(Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003)*

## Poverty

“Poverty [has] a major impact on health and premature death, and the changes of living in poverty are loaded heaving against some social groups.”

*(Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003)*

## Public Safety

Safe neighborhoods increase the likelihood that residents will have a sense of security, spend time outdoors, and interact with each other. Neighborhoods that are perceived to be dangerous or overly-surveilled keep residents inside and discourage productive public life.

*(Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003)*

## Education

“There are strong links between health and education, including longer life, lower rates of infant mortality, obesity rates, diabetes rates and heart disease.”

*(Braveman and Egerter, 2013)*

## Immigration Status

Depending on country of origin and immigration status, residents born outside of the US are may face language barriers and social exclusion in the society at large. The current national anti-immigration climate and public policies that have been put in place may also affect many residents of the study neighborhoods, possibly discouraging their efforts to work, attend school, access healthcare and participate in civic life.

## Addiction

“Individuals turn to alcohol, drugs and tobacco and suffer from their use, but use is influenced by the wider social setting. Drug use is both a response to social breakdown and an important factor in worsening the resulting inequalities in health.”

*(Braveman and Egerter, 2013)*

### Source

*People-Focused Research:  
Participatory Action Research in  
Canarsie, Flatlands, and Flatbush,  
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