

# Special Community Health Needs

## ABSTRACT

Populations are not homogeneous or uniform in terms of health. There are differences in age, gender, socioeconomic status, risk factors of lifestyle, and groups whose burden of disease requires special attention. This chapter addresses special needs such as mental health, oral health, and the many groups in a population whose needs are greater and more specific than those of the general population. Some special needs relate to disasters, refugee and migrant situations, prisoners, gay and lesbian, and aboriginal populations. Each of these includes specific issues for public health attention. The success of a public health system is perhaps best measured by how it manages to meet the needs of such special groups and service needs with preventive and health promotion approaches.

## SUPPORT MATERIAL

### Student Competencies: Transferable Knowledge and Skills

The following are points of emphasis highlighting key principles that public health graduates are expected to understand and apply into practice. The key points arise from this chapter and other studies in specialized courses, seminars, readings during public health education, and continuing education. The selected skills and knowledge are divided into two parts. The first consists of core questions pertaining to immediate student requirements, while the second refers to competencies essential for successful public health practitioners. These include competencies recommended by the American Public Health Association in 2007, as well as those of the European Association of Schools of Public Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada's 2008 Report on Core Competencies. For more detailed competencies please consult the Association of Schools of Public Health website at: <http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=851>

#### Part I: Core Questions

1. Why are mental health diseases a public health concern?
2. What are the advantages of community-oriented care versus custodial care for mental health care?
3. What can be done to prevent mental illness and mental retardation?
4. What is the role of the family and the community in mental health?

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of institutional care and community care for people with intellectual disabilities?
6. What are the major functions of dental public health?
7. What are the public health approaches to dental health?
8. What are special health hazards associated with imprisonment?
9. What is the importance of physical disability in public health? What measures can be taken to reduce the prevalence or severity of physical disability?
10. What are the special health needs of aboriginal populations?
11. What is the role of legislation in protecting such groups as handicapped or mentally ill people?
12. What is the New Public Health approach to identifying and providing care for special groups in the community?

#### Part II: Knowledge and Skills

1. Define a public health problem in relation to special needs issues or population groups in your country/state/city.
  - (a) Conduct a literature search and evaluation involving the most important databases and your own search profile.
  - (b) Systematize an empirical literature search.
  - (c) Present a systematic review with criteria for empirical studies on identified literature.
  - (d) Define the concept of meta-analysis and present an overview of strengths and weaknesses of meta-analyses.
  - (e) Include where possible cost-effectiveness analysis.
  - (f) Summarize the literature including government and non-government agency reports.
  - (g) Define and recommend steps needed to address the problem.
  - (h) Present your report with key findings as a PowerPoint presentation, a written document, a news media briefing, and a blog.

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