

The Influence of Poverty on Health

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Definition of Poverty

1. The state of being poor; having little or no money and few or no material possessions.
2. Lack of the means of providing material needs or comforts.
3. Deficiency in amount; scantiness: “the poverty of feeling that reduced her soul” (*Scott Turow*).
4. Unproductiveness; infertility.

Definition of Health

1. The overall condition of an organism at any given time.
2. Soundness, especially of body or mind; freedom from disease or abnormality.
3. A condition of optimal well-being: *concerned about the ecological health of the area.*
4. A wish for someone's good health, often expressed as a toast.

God's Desire

“However, there shall be no poor among you, since the Lord will surely bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving to you as an inheritance to possess, if only you listen obediently to the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today.”

Deuteronomy 15.4,5

Characteristics of Poverty

Spiritual

- Separation from God
- Sin, error, transgression
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of prayer and worship

Psychological

- Emotional deprivation
- Strife, broken relationships
- Educational deficiencies
- Ingratitude, anger, bitterness

Physical

- Hunger, malnutrition
- Exposure to elements
- Lack of mobility
- Bodily affliction

Energy Balance and Resistance in Whole Person Care – © Dr. Bill Morehouse, Grace Family Medicine

<u>Type of Energy</u>	<u>In</u>	<u>Out</u>	<u>Intervention</u>
Body (<i>soma</i>)	Rest	Work, toil	Scheduling
	Physical	Sleep	Rectify disorder
Soul (<i>psyche</i>)	Health	Insomnia	Medical treatment, healing prayer
	Good nutrition	Illness, injury	Dietary counsel, supplement
	Well-being, fitness	Malnutrition	Balanced exercise
	Sexual harmony (<i>eros</i>)	Improper exercise	Godly therapy
	Righteousness	Sexual dysfunction	Repentance, discipline
	Psychological	Self-righteousness, sin	Interpersonal counsel
	Mind, emotions	Good relationships (<i>phileo</i>)	Marital strife
	Marital harmony	Marital conflict	Marital counsel
	Family harmony	Family conflict	Family therapy
	Job satisfaction	Job, school stress	Vocational counsel
Spirit (<i>pneumo</i>)	Wholesome fellowship	Bad company	Good friends, church
	Harmony with past	Unresolved personal pain	Inner healing, prayer
	Confidence, faith	Anxiety, depression	Reassurance, support
	Financial security	Economic problems	Contentment, giving
	Stability	Transition, stress	Concern, acceptance
	Spiritual	Separation from God	Reconciliation through Christ
	Harmony with God	Conflict with God	Spiritual guidance
	Obedience	Rebellion	Yieldedness, mercy
	Understanding	Ignorance	Bible study, teaching
	Spiritual clarity, vision	Spiritual confusion	Prayer and fasting
	Moral virtue	Hypocrisy, guilt	Wisdom, forgiveness
	Peace (<i>shalom</i>)	Spiritual torment, fear	Consecration, deliverance
	Perennial joy	Emptiness, vanity	Infilling with the Holy Spirit
	Patience	Frustration	Building faith
	Spiritual vitality	Struggle, weakness	Empowerment by the Holy Spirit
	Optimism, hope	Discouragement, hopelessness	Encouragement, inspiration
	Praise, worship	Intercessory burdens	Share, release burdens
	Receiving ministry	Ministry to others (<i>agape</i>)*	Priorities, "pruning"

Fatigue and lowered resistance occur when Energy In < Energy Out. Intervention is directed toward restoring positive balance, wholeness, and integrity. *The object is to attain a positive energy balance that enables an individual to give consistently more to others than they take.

Different Kinds of Poverty

- **Relative vs. Actual**
- **Internal (personal) vs. External (systemic) Causes**
- **Short-term vs. Long-term**
- **Clustered (wide-spread) vs. Isolated**

Relative vs. Actual Poverty

Relative

- Comparative
- Perceived deficits
- Primarily emotional consequences

Actual

- Absolute
- Actual deficits
- Primarily physical consequences

In a broad, historical view, both are “relative” to some degree

Wants vs. Needs

“And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4.19

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house... or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Exodus 20.17

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

Psalms 23.1

Internal vs. External Causes

Sloth

“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, then your poverty will come as a robber, and your want like an armed man.”

Proverbs 24.33,34

vs.

Tsunami

Deprivation and Disaster

- War, politics, adverse weather, flood, fire, isolated 3rd world cultures
- Famine, malnutrition
- Draught, poor sanitation, scarce or contaminated water supplies
- Inadequate shelter from heat, cold and precipitation
- Pollution and pestilence

The Duration Factor

Short-term

- Episodic
- Uncharacteristic
- Vision for change
- Rehabilitate
- Person with problem
- Temporary
- Personal

Long-term

- Generational
- Established mindset
- No vision
- “Habilitate”
- Problem person
- Entrenched
- Social

Clustering of Pathology

- **Poverty often runs in extended families**
- **Poor families tend to live in poor sections of the community, rural and inner cities**
- **Increased crime, unemployment, and dysfunctional patterns of coping with stress**
- **Illness and infirmity are more prevalent**
- **Access to care is more limited**

COPC

Community Oriented Primary Care

A very good approach to communities with significant external and clustered poverty

COPC is...

A systematic approach to the practice of medicine in the community built on principles of epidemiology and community organizing

COPC process...

- Community definition
- Community characterization
- Problem prioritization
- Detailed assessment
- Intervention
- Evaluation

Dysfunctional Coping Strategies

- 1. Eating disorders, including overeating, anorexia, and bulimia**
- 2. Sexual acting out - promiscuity, at risk behavior, pornography, and sexual abuse**
- 3. Alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse and addiction**
- 4. Internalization of stress**
- 5. Anger, profanity, and antisocial behavior**

Effects of Eating Disorders

- Anorexia and bulimia lead to protein, vitamin, and other nutritional deficiencies
- Overeating leads to obesity, which may precipitate and aggravate diabetes, hyperlipidemia, hypertension, sleep apnea syndrome, and heart disease

Effects of Sexual Acting Out

- Sexually transmitted diseases: AIDS, HPV, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Broken trust and damaged relationships
- Self-centeredness and lack of intimacy
- Generational consequences

Effects of Chemical Dependency

- **Mental deterioration and loss of focus**
- **Damage to other end-organs: heart, lungs, liver, kidneys**
- **Loss of internal constraints and damage to relationships, families, parenting**
- **Economic effects of lost productivity**
- **Social effects of drug and alcohol craving and the distribution network that results**

Effects of Internalizing Stress

- **Increased mental preoccupation, anxiety**
- **Irritability, moodiness, and depression**
- **Exacerbation of clinical illnesses**
- **Gastric hyperacidity, GERD, PUD**
- **Some forms of hypertension**
- **Lowering of resistance to infectious agents**
- **Autoimmune disorders**

Damaging Effects of Anger

- **External – arguments, strife, broken relationships, lost jobs**
- **Internal – self-doubt, low self-esteem, poor motivation, depression, lost opportunities**
- **Lack of insight, blaming others, unreceptive to correction**
- **Wasted energy and resources**

God's Alternative to Poverty: The Abundant Life

*“I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and come out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; **I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.** I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them.”*

John 10.9-13

God's Alternatives to Dysfunctional Coping Strategies

- Eating disorders
- Sexual acting out
- Chemical dependency
- Internalization of stress
- Dysfunctional anger
- Healthy nutrition
- Godly sexuality
- Dependency on Him
- Casting anxiety on Him, Shalom peace
- Forgiveness

God's Plan in Christ

- **The Door:** “I am the way, the truth, and the life”
- **Repentance:** Turning away from the old and being born again to a new way of living
- **Fellowship:** Entering into, caring, and being cared for in His redeemed community
- **Maturity:** Growing in wisdom, character, and well-being
- **Provision** from our Heavenly Father: “You have not because you ask not”
- **Outreach:** Giving to others from our abundance

A question of attitude:

“For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.”

Matthew 25.29

- **Poverty = Not Enough**
- **Sufficiency = Enough**
- **Abundance = Plenty to Share**

What is God Doing?

- He's already there, having arrived long before you and I did...
- He's been planting seeds and watering them with His Spirit for quite a while.
- He's ready to reveal His wisdom, grace, provision, and saving and healing love in Christ Jesus to anyone with a heart that's open to receive.

What Does God Want?

- Life and life in abundance for everyone
- People to know and love Him personally so that they can receive all He has for them
- People to demonstrate His love and give open and humble witness to Him as the provider of all good things
- Bottom line: He'd like to redeem the whole community, from bottom to top.

What Can You Do?

- **Seek the mind of the Lord – Where are you called to serve?**
- **Become invested in the community of His choice and the lives of its people.**
- **Listen to their stories; become familiar with their strengths and weaknesses.**
- **Demonstrate His love through practical attempts to meet felt needs in godly ways.**

Proverbs 29

Verse 7 *“The righteous considers the cause of the poor, but the wicked does not understand such knowledge.”*

Verse 13 *“The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: the Lord gives light to the eyes of both.”*

Verse 14 *“The king who judges the poor with truth, his throne will be established forever.”*

Addressing the Whole Problem

“In short, we must work on two fronts. On the one hand, we must continue to resist the system which is the basic cause of our lagging standards; on the other hand, we must work constructively to improve the standards themselves.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

What's the Answer?

Poverty and Bad Health
(the thief's provision)?

NO!

Abundant Life and Good Health
(God's provision)?

YES!