

Defining what health
is



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

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Introduction to the Concepts of Health

Health is a natural phenomenon and according to (Naidoo and Will, 2009) health has both a negative and a positive meaning. In this assignment, one would begin by defining what health is. Also comparing and contrasting two theories of health using various authors and different cultures. The inequalities of health would also be examined. The two theories that would be used are: Health is an ideal state and Health is a commodity (Seedhouse, 2001). The main author used in reaching my conclusion would be David (Seedhouse, 2006) as well as others.

The negative defines health as being free from any disease or illnesses. This explanation has come from western scientific ideas. The positive defines according to the World Health Organisation (1946) ' a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. (Naidoo and Will, 2009).

Health has different meaning to different individuals, communities and countries. Acquiring the privilege to medical attention when required is a gift that not many countries are fortunate to get at no price. This may contrast with many west African countries where medical health care is available at a price and not all of its citizens can afford the price due to lack of financial privileges, therefore living them disadvantage to always receiving adequate medical healthcare.

There are two variables that determine the effect on health. First is a measure of ill health such as mortality or morbidity and the second are

factors such as gender and occupation that might cause a difference in health. (Naidoo and Will, 2009). Health is determined by the factors such as housing, finance, environment; this entire determinant has great impact on our daily life's. The determinants can also lead to the inequalities in health because as individuals it is often difficult to balance ones social lifestyle, the resources, facilities and ones social status; this can also be a contributor to the inequalities.

The Pyramid of Hierarchy developed by (Maslow 1945 cited in Naidoo and Will, 2009) mentions that every individual's desires to be satisfied by all that is included in his pyramid of needs. To acquire the perfect health one needs peace of mind, warmth, love and shelter and social health; this would contribute to how ones health is determined because everything needs to be in sequence. Many might not be fortunate to acquire such and therefore would encounter the basic health problems that can be associated with poverty, unclean water and many other factors. According to (WHO 2001 cited in Tones and Green, 2004) 80, 000 of deaths are due to natural causes. This can be a direct result too many becoming disadvantaged by poverty; not having the adequate facility to clean water, membership or access to gym facilities, food or shelter.

Commodity in health can mean different things in terms of one ability to have a sound health; buying of health services to benefit ones well being. (Seedhouse, 2009) makes one to understand that health can be bought, given, or can even be sold and it careless can be lost. Health is a natural process which is vital, but illness can take place anytime. Many people are unfortunate to come a family who has defected genes that may have great

consequence on how they live their everyday life. In many developed countries people give up their health rights because of the life style they choose to live and this can greatly impact on their health; this could be through smoking or drinking of alcohol or other abusing other substance as they have access to the National health service (NHS) where they can access free healthcare, this contrast to many economically undeveloped countries where they would value and avoid things that would contribute to their health declining as they won't be able to access the same rights as people with free NHS service. Without health we are non-excitant and won't be able to function.

Seedhouse 2001 states that commodity is perceived as goods or possessions that can be acquired through cash or gifts or even sold. There are individuals that might be ill or sick, and for them to function effectively they might require to purchase some medication and in some cases under go surgery to provide rapid recovery to their sound health. This now asks what is sound health? One would say that it is an individuals well being with their own independent state of mind and psychical well being.

The advantage is being able to have a choice when feeling poorly to purchase goods (medication) that one would hope would provide a feeling of well-being, and the disadvantage is when people are not privileged enough to acquire the same facility because the do not have money.

Ideal state looks at the perfect health, the well being of an individual. An individual according to ((Seedhouse, 2006)) needs to be healthy on three levels; these include psychically, emotionally and mentally and when one is

free from any pain. It would be difficult for every individual to acquire all this as the feelings of an individual is vital in this theory because only the individual can know what they are feeling this can be mood swings or pain. A person might be psychically unable to move their legs but within themselves are happy and mentally capable of carrying out other daily duties because they are alive and have loving people that can enhance on their emotional and mental state.

Ideal state theory links with the commodity theory because it is possible for the individual to buy or be prescribed medication that might aim to provide the ideal health, but because of the outcome of the medication the pain or illness might go away and one would encounter side effects that can affect ones mood or other body parts but individual would be first to notice the problems. These individuals would still regard themselves as having their wellbeing because they are still able bodies and can carry out their daily tasks and routines.

The advantage of the ideal health theory is that individuals can purchase the drugs to control their illness that would provide would aim to provide them with good health.

Illnesses occur within ones society, the way in which it is handled or managed depends on the societal norm that might be event in the culture. We are born into our culture where we would be introduced to the clothing, food, morals, law of the land and the values that should be followed.

Maclachlan 2006 states that culture has many dimensions but that a culture provides one with the guidelines that should be followed. A culture would

always change and is never dormant. The changes in many cases can make the lives of individuals better or worse.

One would focus on the disadvantages and advantages of disability, one need to recognise this as a social model, varies critically on the society in which their disability, illness or impairments are contextualised. Disability has been for many years said to be a “ social construct” and the society’s role is constraining the disabled people’s life, could also be the stigma that has been associated with accessing education, employment or independent housing and the inequality in creating disability (Barton, 1996; Swain et al 1993).

Disabled people are socially margined within many societies depending on how the culture embraces them. According to the report carried out by (Spiderstein et al cited in MacLachlan 2006) the disabled living within the Nigerian culture would have the lease chance of sustaining friends with 41 per cent chances, or being capable of carrying out daily duties without being stigmatised against, these would contrast to the individuals who are living within the culture of the USA with the highest chance of 93 per cent as the beliefs or morals that is shared within their culture would be different to that in Nigeria. The individuals limitations (physical or mental); would be the disadvantage within the cultures more than the USA as many would not have the opportunity to express their needs and are cast out.

One would argue that if the Nigerian culture embraces the individual or have adequate resources to provide medication the individual might have the feeling of well-being and might even be capable of making their own

decision, rather the society make all the decisions for them and by doing so oppresses the disabled individuals. This varies within ones culture because of the resource and support; to have an ideal health may not always is provided depending on one social status, culture or society; the individual might feel that they are mentally capable, but not psychically and would require commodity of finances to might regain their feeling of well being.

To conclude on would say that health is hard to define; many have tried for years and have not concluded on the definition for the ideal health, the ideal health would vary depending on the individual, resource and the society. In the society, there are goods (medication, surgery) that can be purchase or performed to enable the ideal health and in some case provide side effect that would bring other health related issues.

Commodity and Ideal health interlinks because in many cases one would need the acquire medication, food and being health to have the perfect well-being but every individual is different. In terms of culture and health, it is important to note that this change can have a good or bad effect depending on the societal laws and inequalities in the land.

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