

Lifestyle choices limit good health

[Life](#)



The Scottish diet has been identified as particularly poor, it is high in salt, sugar and fat, and low in fresh fruit and vegetables. Neither women nor men meet the recommended levels of exercise; only 33% of women and 45% of men meet the recommended levels Of exercise. It is therefore not surprising that 59% of Scottish women and 69% or Scottish men are overweight and it is also not surprising that Scotland suffers from very high levels of weigh-relatedhealthproblems, fromdiabetesto cancer.

This suggests that the choices that we make about what we eat are impacting on the nation's health to a great degree. In addition, habits such assmokingcertainly do have a connection with ill health. Smoking is a known cause of 25 serious diseases, including lung cancer, heart disease and respiratory problems. One in every four Scottish people will die from smoking related causes. It is therefore clear that the 23% of Scottish people who smoke are putting both their own health and others around them in danger.

Although all individuals have the ability to make healthy choices some of us are more likely to live healthy lifestyles than others. It can be cheap to live healthily - buying fruit or going for a walk - but for those inpoverty, who are less likely to do so due to solicitation, knowledge, motivationor time. For instance, in Scotland least deprived areas, 1 1% of people smoke. In the most deprived areas, 40% of people smoke. Consequently, there are higher rates of lung cancer, heart disease, and low birth-weight babies in the most deprived areas of Scotland than in the least deprived areas.

However, it is too simple to blame the poor for causing their own ill health through " bad choices". For instance, Dry Harry Burns has spoken of the

biology of poverty. In which he has argued that infants born into deprivation are exposed to the great stress, which has a lasting effect on the brain and body and leaved them more vulnerable to ease in later life. This has contributed to an astonishing 28 year male life expectancy gap between Gallon in Glasgow and the wealthy suburb of Leonie.

Therefore, the health gap between rich and poor cannot be explained by lifestyle alone and we must take into account the wider effects of poverty on health. As a final point, other factors that are unrelated to lifestyle can also limit good health. Certain illnesses can be passed on in the genes. For instance, it is believed that 60% of cancers are linked to family history. However, few illnesses are purely hereditary and even those who carry a genetic risk can lessen their risk of falling ill by making good lifestyle choices.

For example, strokes do run in families, but it is said that 25% of them could have been prevented by doing regular daily exercise, such as walking. Therefore, lifestyles can still have an impact in the case of hereditary illnesses and is an important factor. In conclusion, while lifestyle factors do impact on health, the causes of ill health are more complex. Ill health is most usually the result of a combination of genes, environment and lifestyle factors and it is therefore too simple to say lifestyle is the main cause of ill health.