Lebanese American University
School of Medicine
Social Medicine

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“All medicine is inescapably social”

Dr. Leon Eisenberg
Social Medicine

• Social, economic and political forces influence health and the occurrence and course of most diseases.

• These forces powerfully affect who gets sick, what diseases afflict them, what treatments are available to them, and the outcomes of treatment.
## Life expectancy at birth (men)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Life Expectancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow, Scotland (deprived suburb)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Korea</td>
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<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow, Scotland (affluent suburb)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Widening Treatment Gap

AIDS deaths in Africa

AIDS deaths in Western Europe

Yearly deaths as a proportion of 1995 values


HAART

Social Medicine Curriculum

• Main themes:
  – Social Determinants of health & disease
  – Social Meanings of Disease
  – Social Responses to Disease

• Spans over four years
Social Medicine Curriculum

• **Introduce** students to the theory and practice of this **interdisciplinary** field of inquiry.

• **Understand** how social, economic, and political conditions
  – impact health and disease and affect their patients and their communities.
  – influence the practice of medicine and medical knowledge.

• **Recognize** the personal, social and cultural meanings of illness, its burden and impact on the patient, her family and her wider social network.
Social Medicine Curriculum

• **Discuss** the link between health and human rights.

• **Investigate** and **address** key social, cultural, and ethical barriers to the delivery of health care and to diminishing health disparities in the receipt of care.

• **Foster** conditions in which this understanding can lead to a healthier society.

• **Advocate** for the social responsibility of medical professionals.
Brain Drain

Physicians Working

All Deaths

www.worldmapper.org
Poverty..Resource allocation
Social Determinants of Health

Housing
Social Meanings of Disease

How can medicine & physicians understand social suffering in the individual and the community?

How can we accomplish “healing”, the enduring task of physicians, better?
Inequities & globalization
how do they affect the
health of the most
vulnerable members of
society?
Social Medicine Curriculum

We will engage students by:

• Introducing them during lectures and tutorials to the specialized literatures and methods in medical anthropology, epidemiology, social history of medicine, medical ethics, and medical humanities.

• Providing opportunities for supervised experiences in community and clinical settings that join service with learning with special emphasis on preventing and reducing health inequalities.

• Fostering personal development and commitment to humane and ethical medical care.
Social Responses to Disease

Disease: One Piece of A Larger Puzzle
Final thought..

Global Medical Ethics

Medical Ethics of Global health
“It matters more what kind of patient has the disease, than what kind of disease it is.”

Sir William Osler
Objectives of the Social Medicine Curriculum

• Have an understanding of the field of social medicine, its historical roots and how it is practiced today.
• Understand the personal and social meaning of illness.
• Recognize the influence of culture on the experience and the stories of illness.
• Recognize the impact of chronic illness and disability on the individual, his family and the wider social network.
• Become familiar with social analysis that can be applied to the study of the illness and care and to their improvement.
• Become aware of the social processes that impact and transform medical students during their training.
• Analyse how social factors and technology influence medical knowledge and health care.
• Know the social determinants of health and disease and apply this knowledge at the patient and community level.
• Be able to think critically about health inequality and be able to suggest how to prevent or reduce health disparities.
• Understand how political, economic and historic trends influence the distribution of diseases within and among different societies with focus on infectious diseases.
• Be able to articulate the links between health and human rights and the synergistic relationship between addressing human rights and achieving the highest attainable standard of health.
• Demonstrate sufficient knowledge of health care systems and health institutions in the world in general and in Lebanon in specific.
• Become familiar with the debates on health care financing.
• Demonstrate sufficient background in contemporary global health problems and trends and the challenges of global health delivery.
• Value the social responsibility of physicians and the medical profession.
• Value the contribution of research in reducing health disparities.
Premises

Social Roots
• Diseases have social roots; attaining health at a population level requires the coordination of health policies with social policies.

Social Inequalities
• Inequities based on social class, race, ethnicity, gender, and global relations contribute to inequalities in health conditions and access to care.

Culture
• Illness is an experience, often a powerful and a deeply interpersonal experience that expresses and is created out of cultural values and practices.

Medicine as a Moral Practice
• Suffering and medical care are moral processes that express and create what is at stake in lived experience.

New Biotechnologies
• Changes in medical knowledge and the production of new biotechnologies create new social, cultural, political, and economic realities, resulting in complex ethical challenges.
Premises

Globalization and global health

• Health and medicine are global enterprises, and globalization—a crucial process of current social change—has an enormous impact on medicine.

• There is a wide gap between medical knowledge and resources on one hand and the effective delivery of health care on the other.

• Global Health Delivery

• Research and training in the new field of Global Health Delivery will help to bridge the implementation gap.