

Key concepts and approaches

Never Stand Still

Medicine

Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity

SARAH SIMPSON

Innov8: Equity and Commissioning Workshop
2-3 August, 2017, North Sydney

Social determinants of health

The social characteristics in which living takes place

- The social conditions in which people grow, live, work and age
- Social conditions
 - are shaped by distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels
 - influenced by economic and social policy choices



Equity in health

Equity in health implies that ideally everyone should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential and that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this potential if it can be avoided.

(Whitehead, 1990; 9)



Health equity

- Absence of **avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences** among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically.
- Implies that ideally everyone should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential and, more pragmatically, that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this potential.
- Health equity is the absence of health inequities.

(European Commission, 2009)



Aim of policy for equity in health

... to reduce or eliminate those health differences which result from factors which are considered to be both avoidable and unfair.

(Whitehead, 1990; 9)



Differentials/Inequality and Equity

- Equality/Inequality – descriptive –
 - Differences
 - Differentials

That may or may not be due to factors that are avoidable and unfair
- Equity/Inequity – involves analysis and a decision about whether the differences are due to factors that are avoidable and unfair, e.g. gender norms and socioeconomic status / position



Action on social determinants and equity

- Action to tackle social determinants \neq
 - Action to improve health equity or decrease health inequities
 - Action to tackle the social determinants of health inequities
- Action on social determinants = increasing public transport to increase physical activity in the population generally
- Action on social determinants of health inequity = increasing public transport to socioeconomically deprived areas



Gender

- Refers to the socially constructed roles, rights, responsibilities and limitations assigned to women and men, boys and girls. For example, higher rates of eating disorders among females, and higher rates of road accidents among young adult males. Amenable to change
- **Sex** refers to the biological and physiological characteristics of males and females, such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones. Usually, difficult to change.

Gender



Gender analysis

- Analyses differences between males and females in:
 - risk and exposure
 - health-seeking behaviour
 - access and use of services
 - experiences in health care settings
 - treatment options
 - impact of ill-health
- Asks critical questions about differences e.g. lower life expectancy of men:
 - Multi-level causes linked to gender norms, roles and relations
 - Unequal power relations between and among groups of women and men
 - Intersection of gender with other contextual factors such as ethnicity, income and age

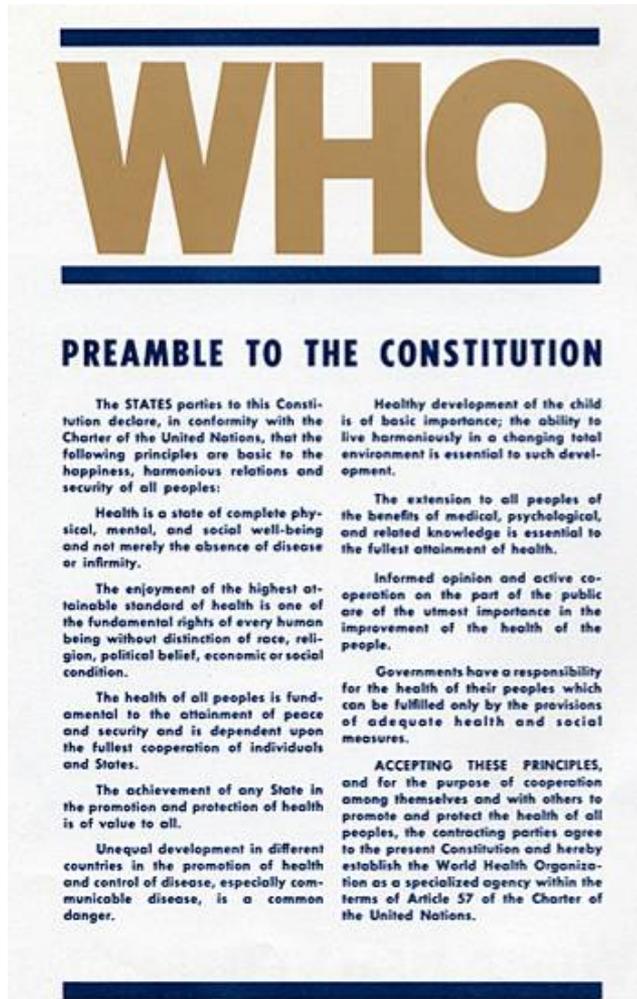
The Right to health

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25

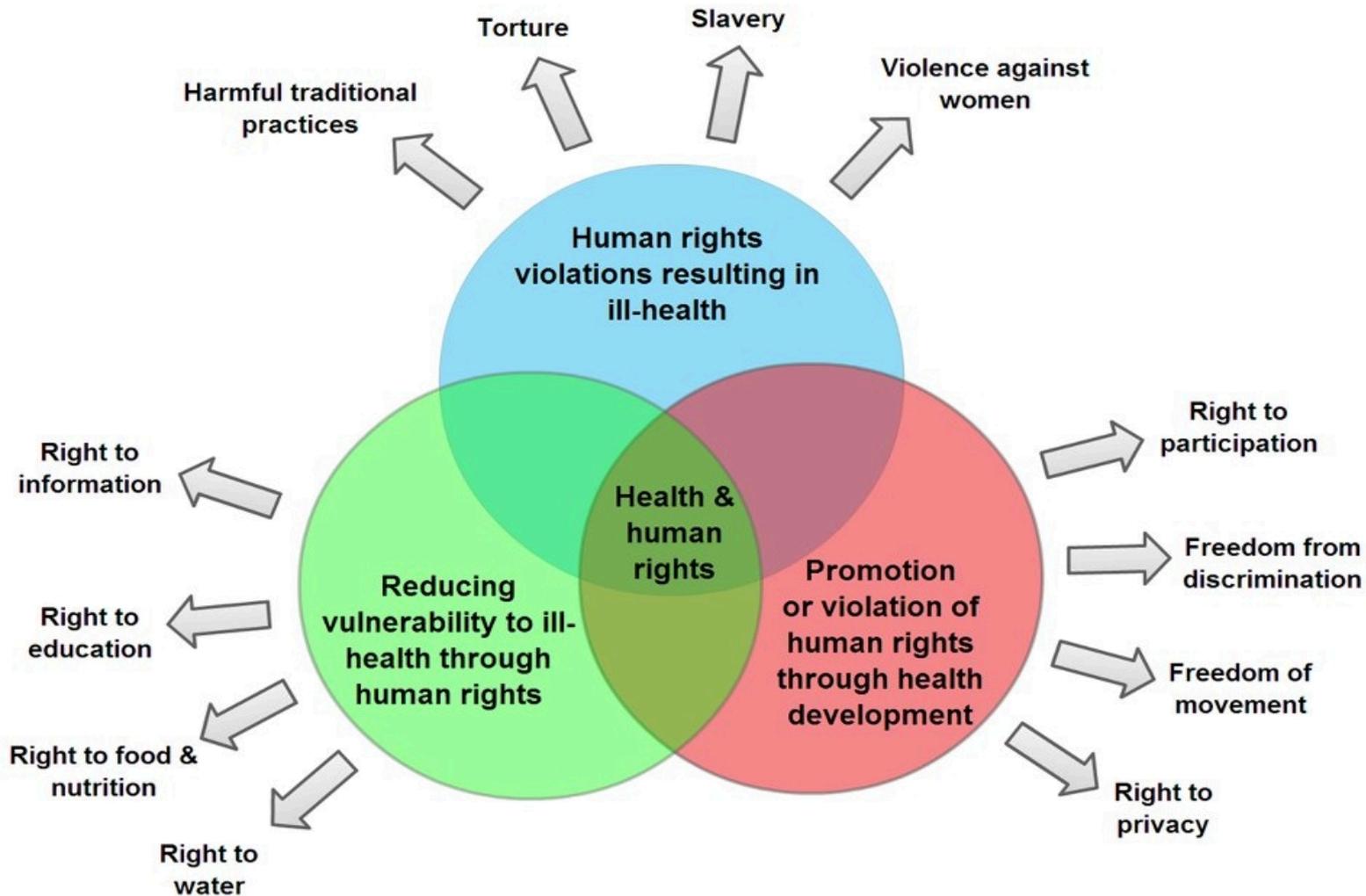


Origins of the right to health



“The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.”

Health & human rights



Human rights-based approach to health

- All health policies, strategies and programmes be designed with the objective of progressively improving the enjoyment of people to the right to health and other health-related human rights
- Focuses attention and provides strategies and solutions to redress inequalities, discriminatory practices and unjust power relations



HEALTH IN THE SDG ERA

