

# **PUBLIC HEALTH**

**COMMUNITY MEDICINE / DOCTOR 023**

- Public health has made a significant impact of the health of the populations making people healthy and saving lives
  
- For example : In US between 1900-1999 people's life expectancy has increased by over 30 years . Did you know that 25 of these (extra years) gained are due to the public health intervention.
  
- ✓ What is public health?
- ✓ How it's different from clinical medicine?
- ✓ Who does public health?
- ✓ How is it done ?

## What is HEALTH ?

(According to the World Health Organization) It is a complete state of physical, mental , social well being not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Does not focus on the physical aspect but also on the mental and social aspects) It is a bold and ambitious definition

## What is PUBLIC HEALTH ?

It's the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organized efforts of society.

## Let's take an EXAMPLE

If someone had an accident and has a broken leg. The clinicians focus in the immediate health problems, how to fix his fractured leg? Clinician focuses on the individual. While public health is holistic . Figuring out how and why this accident happened? So that action can be taken to prevent it from happening again. Why did he have the accident? Was the problem with his vision? Was it poor knowledge of driving skills or bad attitude towards driving? Did he take alcohol or drug? Are there laws against this and resources to enforce it? What are community expectations or attitudes towards driving? Does he have a good social support network that will help in this recovery or prevent this from happening again? Was the road safe? Was he driving a safe car that was well maintained? If not , why that ? Could he cannot afford it? If not, why could he not afford it? Does he have a job that doesn't pay well? Why is that, Is it because he did not access to good education? Was there good access to health services which determines his treatment and recovery? Etc

## How is PUBLIC HEALTH different from CLINICAL MEDICINE ?

Clinical medicine deals with healing in general, including injuries, diseases, etc. While public health works in how to prevent these injuries or diseases to happen. How? By searching how this happened. These factors are the determinants of health , such as :

- Individual characteristics
- Lifestyle and behaviors
- Physical, social and economic environment

# Social DETERMINANTS of health

In order to make a difference in health there is action needed to cross all different determinants. Public health focuses on these upstream factors to make changes that can benefit the health of the population as a whole, so who is responsible for public health?

The responsibility of creating a healthy community rests with all sectors of society and health departments.

Coordinated effort of broad range of stakeholders is needed to improve the health of the population , this include:

- Other areas of government
- Private sectors
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- International organizations
- Communities

All should unite with a shared goal of improving health of the public.

## How PUBLIC HEALTH works?

- The world Federation of public health Association has developed a useful framework to understand how public health is delivered.
- There are three core service areas of public health and a group of enablers that ensure that these services can occur effectively and efficiently.

**The CORES of public health are:**

## **1) PROTECTION**

Control of infectious disease

Managing environmental hazard

Healthy workplaces

Managing health emergencies

## **2) PROMOTION**

Improving the health of population. It covers a broad range of activities that not only focuses on individuals like promoting health behaviors, but also on improving the social determinant of health

## **3) PREVENTION**

Preventing health issue before they occur . It includes activities such as vaccination or screening



To enable these core areas to FUNCTION there need to be :

- Good governance
- Advocacy : to influence and obtain support and commitment for actions that support a health goal
- Capacity : having an adequate, well trained and supported public health workforce
- Accurate , timely information to support health actions such as relevant research, surveillance, monitoring and evaluation