Social Determinants and Health Inequalities in Slovenia

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Slovenia

- Geographical position: centre of Europe between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea (46.6 km of sea coast)
- The official language is Slovene, one of the South Slavonic languages.
- Population of Slovenia: 2,002,042
- Population distribution: approx. 50% urban/rural
- Population density: 98/sq.km
- Size of Territory: 20,273 sq.km
Macroeconomic Determinants

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

- Relatively large share of public expenditure for social protection (26.6% GDP)
- Low income inequality – 2003 (3.1 Inequality of income distribution: S80/S20 quintile share ratio; 22.1 Inequality of income distribution: Gini coefficient (in %))
- Low poverty rate (10.0 at risk of poverty rate)
- Universal education opportunities
- Universal health care
- Unequal economic development between regions
Life expectancy at birth in Slovenia and EU (in years)  

Source: WHO/Europe, European HFA Database 2003
Life expectancy at birth among males in Slovenia and EU (in years)  

Source: WHO/Europe, European HFA Database 2003

[Diagram showing life expectancy trends for Slovenia and EU from 1980 to 2010]
Life expectancy at birth among females in Slovenia and EU (in years)  
Source: WHO/Europe, European HFA Database 2003
Infant deaths per 1000 live births in Slovenia and EU

Source: WHO/Europe, European HFA Database 2003
Human development index (HDI) in Slovenia

Source: WHO/Europe, European HFA Database 2003
Data on inequalities in health – socioeconomic status

○ research currently being conducted
○ findings indicate: both patterns of morbidity and mortality exhibit - stratification factors are important determinants of the cause of death, age of death (Source: Human Development Report Slovenia 2002/03)
○ routine data collection concerning Inequalities in health in regard to socioeconomic status is being upgraded
Interregional Health Inequalities Pomurje

- North east region of Slovenia
- Educational structure
- Mortality rate
- Life expectancy – of men and women 3 and 2 years shorter than Slovene average
Death rates, administrative units, 2003
Source: Health Statistics Yearbook Slovenia 2003

Death rates, administrative units, 2003

Slika 2.1b. Stopnje umrljivosti po upravnih enotah, 2003

Death rates, administrative units, 2003
Background

- Socioeconomic indicators
  - Highest unemployment 17%
    - GDP 70%
- Environment
  - Burden of agriculture
  - Infrastructure
- Health
  - Life expectancy
  - Negative natural growth
  - Aging population
  - Morbidity, mortality
Policies and actions to date

- Project “Investment in Health and Development in Pomurje-Mura” (2000)
  - Socioeconomic and environmental development of Pomurje region

- Health promotion strategy and action plan for tackling social inequalities in health in the Pomurje region (2005)
  - Addresses interrregional and intraregional health inequalities in Pomurje region
Objectives – Mura project

Source: Regional Institute of Public Health, Murska Sobota

- to identify, develop, implement, and strengthen best practices in the field of social-economic and environmental development for achieving better health and quality of life for the people in the Pomurje region
- make people sensitive and accountable for their health and to equip them to take adequate actions by health promotion programs
- improve the regional state of health indicators and quality of life of the Pomurje inhabitants
- promote economic and social development by promoting and supporting strategic partnerships and programmes in the region
Outcomes and lessons learned – Mura project

- **Strategic level**
  - program MURA priority in Regional Development Plan
  - regional agreement signed by the mayors and other regional institutions
  - other sectors acknowledge health issues
  - stronger intersectoral co-operation

- **Operational level**
  - strong health promotion network
  - new approaches, tools and programmes
  - strong co-operation with NGO
  - annually cca. 8-10 implementation projects in the field of health promotion, development of healthy products and services, and network building
CINDI Health Monitor Slovenija 2004

dr. Lijana Zaletel-Kragelj, dr.med.
Faculty of Medicine, Cindi Slovenija

- Significant improvement towards more healthy
  - fat use by preparation of food
  - milk quality
  - red meat consumption
  - fried food consumption
  - consumption of sweet nonalcoholic beverages
  - salt usage

- Slight improvement towards more healthy
  - fruit consumption
  - Body Mass Index
  - vegetable consumption
Health promotion strategy and action plan for tackling social inequalities in health in the Pomurje region

- Tackles poor health through health promotion involving sectors such as agriculture, tourism, employment, environment, cultural heritage, and education.

- Tackling health inequalities through: (1) the formulation of national or regional health inequality targets; (2) networking for the integration of health determinants in other policy areas; (3) supporting community development approaches; (4) increasing access to health care and preventive services; (5) development of indicators and health monitoring systems; (6) health impact assessment; (7) evaluation of interventions; and (8) dissemination of effective practices and methods.
Aims of the regional strategy

- Awareness of regional stakeholders
- Increase community capacity
- Early detection of non-communicable chronic diseases
- Supporting vulnerable groups
- Healthy physical environment
Regional strategy Pomurje

- Part of the regional development plan 2007 – 2013
- Example of participative strategic planning at regional level
Health inequalities mentioned in other national strategies:

- National Health Care Programme - Health for All
  - health care linked to anti-poverty and social exclusion issues
- National programme of social security 2006-2010
  - ensuring social protection
- Programme of Fighting Poverty and Social Exclusion
  - implemented measures in health care (uniform compulsory health insurance, rights deriving from insurance)
  - facilitating access to health care
Future Plans

- Sustaining the commitment – preparation of a comprehensive National plan for tackling inequalities in health

- Improving the community capacity
  - Human resource training
  - Partnership

- Integrating good practices into the system

- Focus on economic determinants of health in the region
Future Plans

- Reducing health inequalities requires actions in various policy areas
- More network – interdisciplinary – oriented public health policy making
- Multilevel multidisciplinary and multisectoral approaches to health issues
Output from the expert group

- Health from a socioeconomic point of view place on the political agenda

- Stimulate participation in international comparable studies

- Analysing and reviewing policies
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