Vulnerable groups
Health needs

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Learning outcomes

You should be able to:

• Define vulnerable population
• Identify groups within society that are considered vulnerable
• Outline the specific health needs vulnerable population
• Describe public health strategies to meet the health needs of vulnerable groups
Defining Vulnerable Groups

• Vulnerable populations are defined as those at greater risk for poor health status and health care access
• Those who are likely to have additional needs and experience poorer outcomes if these needs are not met.
• Those with particular health needs that may be greater or different to the general population.
Defining Vulnerable Groups

Many efforts have been made to characterize vulnerable groups, by:

• Diseases (e.g., HIV),
• Age groups (e.g., the elderly),
• and demographics (e.g., homeless individuals).
Defining Vulnerable Groups

Regardless of how they are categorized, vulnerable populations generally include:

• Racial and ethnic minorities,
• Low socio-economic status populations,
• and those without adequate potential access to care (e.g., the uninsured or those without a regular source of care).
Vulnerability is a multidimensional construct with many definitions

**Physically vulnerable groups**
- High risk mothers and infants
- Chronically ill and disabled
- Persons living with HIV/AIDS

**Psychologically vulnerable groups**
- Mentally ill and disabled
- Alcohol or substance abusers
- Suicide or homicide prone

**Socially vulnerable groups**
- Abusing families
- Internally Displaced People and refugees
- Homeless persons
Defining Vulnerable Groups

**Could include:**

- Children; *Why?*
- Women; *Why?*
- Elderly; *Why?*
- Survivors of violence; *Why?*
- People with physical or mental disabilities; *Why?*
- Internally displaced people; *Why?*
- People with certain diseases; (Cancer, TB, HIV-AID, Substance abuse etc.)
- Ethnic minorities.
What do children need?

• Preventive services; vaccination, Oral rehydration therapy etc.
• Curable services; control of diarrheal and respiratory diseases etc.
• Rehabilitative services; Dealing with anomalies and deformities
• Social services; for homeless, orphans
• Education
• Play areas
What do women need?

• Preventive services; educational and supplementation of essential materials, vaccination eg. Tetanus, premarital counselling, reproductive health etc.

• Curable services; treatment of common diseases

• Rehabilitative services; deal with complications

• Physical safety; prevent gender and other kind of violence

• Access to post-natal care

• Access to safe water and fuel

• Opportunities for income-generating activities
What do elderly people need?

Access to health care for:

1. Preventive services
2. Curable services
3. Rehabilitative services
   • Physical safety
   • Social safety: Someone to carry their food and water
What do Survivors of violence need?

• Access to counselling and specific health-care support
• Preventive services
• Curable services
• Rehabilitative services
• Physical safety
What do People with physical or mental disabilities need?

- Access to counselling and specific health-care support
- Activities with the community to support integration
- Preventive services
- Curable services
- Rehabilitative services
- Physical safety
What do People with Ethnic minorities need?

• Physical safety
• Representation
• Appropriate opportunities to practice faith or culturally based activities
• Preventive services
• Curable services
• Rehabilitative services
Internally Displaced People; Situation in Iraq

• Since early August, some 850 000 people have been uprooted, scaling up the overall figure of people displaced in Iraq to 1.8 million overall.

• The mass displacement and relocation of entire communities are a public health concern.
Burden on Health services

• Multiple risk factors result in a higher risk for poor health outcomes.

• Patients with poorer health outcomes place an additional burden on healthcare systems.

• Improved access and utilization of primary care services can decrease the burden on hospital systems, reducing medical costs for high risk individuals.
Bad weather conditions

↑ Patients caseload

Shortages of essential medical supplies

Shortages of essential medicines

Overloaded medical staff
Internally Displaced People; Action plan

• Ministry of Health supported by WHO and other governmental and nongovernmental organization are focusing on two main health strategic objectives:
  • The first is providing timely basic package of primary and secondary health care services, including reproductive and mental health services, care for people with physical disabilities, and patients with chronic diseases and nutrition services;
  • and the second objective is strengthening the early detection, investigation and response to outbreaks of communicable diseases for various target populations inclusive of the internally displaced population and Syrian refugees.”