The Health Impact of Loneliness: Emerging Evidence and Interventions

Donald M. Berwick, MD, MPP
President Emeritus and Senior Fellow
Institute for Healthcare Improvement

October 15, 2018
Life Span and Life Circumstances

Life Expectancy
\[ \Delta 10 \text{ years} \]

Loss of Life:
- 6 Months/Minute
- 2.3 Years/Mile
Life Expectancy and the London Tube
Life Expectancy and the London Tube

96 Years

75 Years
The Science of Health

- Sir Douglas Black
- Julian Tudor Hart
- Sir Michael Marmot
What Determines Variation in Health?

- Social & Economic Factors: 40%
- Health Behaviors: 30%
- Clinical Care: 10%
- Physical Environment: 10%
- Genes & Biology: 10%
Determinants of health

- Environment
  - National economic strategy
- Education
- Agriculture and food
- Eating habits
- Recreational and culture
- Exercise
- Social network
- Sex and peaceful coexistence
- Social insurance
- Public assistance
- Sleeping habits
- Health care
- Children's contact with adults
- Age
- Sex
- Heredity
- Work
- Environment
- Unemployment
- Tobacco
- Social support
- Living situation
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Traffic
Determinants of health

- Environment
  - National economic strategy
- Education
  - Agriculture and food
- Traffic
- Drugs
- Social network
  - Sex and peaceful coexistence
  - Public assistance
- Work
- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Living situation
- Unemployment
- Social support
- Environment
- Age
- Sex
- Heredity
- Health care
What Does “Social Determinants” Mean?

Diagram showing layers of factors influencing health:
- General socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions
- Living and working conditions
- Unemployment
- Water and sanitation
- Health care services
- Housing
- Education
- Work environment
- Agriculture and food production

Individual lifestyle factors:
- Age, sex and constitutional factors
“Salutogenesis” – Dr. Wayne Jonas
The Blue Zone Nine – Dan Buettner

**Move Naturally**
1. Make daily physical activity an unavoidable part of your environment

**Right Outlook**
2. Know your purpose
3. Downshift: work less, slow down, take vacations

**Eat Wisely**
4. Eat until 80% full
5. More veggies, less meat & processed food
6. Drink a glass of red wine each day

**Belong**
7. Create a healthy social network
8. Connect/reconnect with religion
9. Prioritize family
Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for coronary heart disease and stroke: systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal observational studies

Nicole K Valtorta, Mona Kanaan, Simon Gilbody, Sara Ronzi, Barbara Hanratty

“Poor social relationships were associated with a 29% increase in risk of incident CHD (pooled relative risk: 1.29, 95% CI 1.04 to 1.59) and a 32% increase in risk of stroke”
As a force in shaping our health and well-being, medical care pales in comparison with the circumstances and properties of the communities in which we live. Few aspects of community are more powerful in this regard than is the degree of connectedness and social support for individuals.