

Health Impact Assessment

In Environmental Assessments
undertaken for projects in the
Mackenzie Valley

Carolyn Dunn, Health Canada
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Human Health

- Human health is defined as:
 - “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”
- Goal of Health Impact Assessment:
 - Minimize negative effects, maximize positive effects, reduce inequality

Health and MVRMA

- The definition of impact under MVRMA includes:
 - Effects on the social and cultural environment
- Protection of social, cultural and economic well-being is one of the guiding principles of Part 5 of the MVRMA
- Well-being is an important aspect of human health

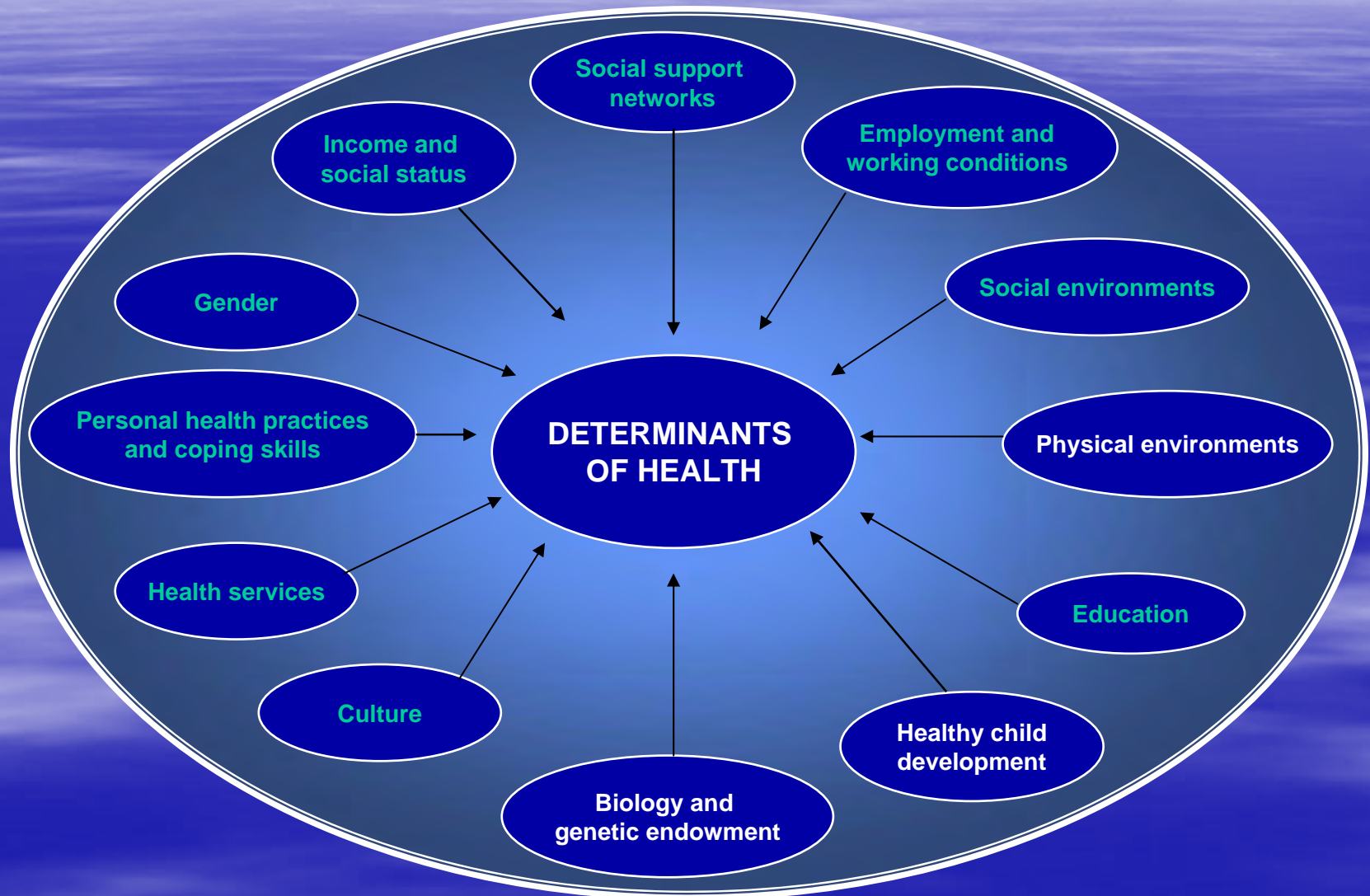
Six Steps in Impact Assessment

- This is part of an environmental assessment:
 - Scoping broadly, identify valued components
 - Community specific baseline description
 - Identify health impacts
 - Identify mitigation measures
 - Evaluate significance
 - Mitigation and follow-up

Population Health Approach

- In order to frame the baseline description and impact assessment, use the determinants of health framework
- Indicators of each determinant can be used in baseline studies and impact assessment, in determining mitigation and deciding what follow up should be

The determinants of health



Social Support Networks

- More social contacts = better health
- Family & friends help provide basics of food & shelter
- Need strong families, communities conducive to social interaction, less discrimination & social tolerance
- Indicator ex: level of family violence



Employment & Working Conditions

- More control over work and less stress = healthier
- Workplace social support
- Unemployment = poorer health
- Safe workplaces & injury prevention
- Traditional Economy
- Indicator ex: unemployment rate



Social Environments

- Values and norms of a society
- Social stability
- Recognition of diversity
- Good working relationships
- Cohesive communities
- Indicator ex: involvement in community organizations



Education

- More education = better health
- More education = less absenteeism
- More education = socio-economic status
- Better sense of control
- Better information to stay healthy
- Indicator ex: # years of schooling



Culture

- Importance of way of life
- Importance of language
- Interaction between dominant and minority cultures
- Linked to social support networks, education
- Indicator ex: use of native language



Health Services

- Prenatal care & immunization
- Education on health risks & healthy choices to adopt healthy lifestyles
- More effort on preventive & primary care services
- Indicator: availability of local health services



Personal Health Practices & Coping Skills

- Personal practices - smoking, alcohol, drugs, eating habits & physical activity
- Coping skills enable people to be self reliant, solve problems & make informed choices that enhance health
- Indicator ex: amount of country foods in the diet



Gender

- Society-determined roles, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power of males or females
- Different impacts of projects on men and women
- Indicator ex: number of single parent families



Income & Social Status

- Most important determinant of health
- More equitable distribution of wealth, the healthier the population
- Better relative social status = better health
- Degree of control that one has
- Indicator ex: median income



Methods

- Economic models
- Perception surveys
- Human health risk assessment

- Importance of interdependence and holistic approach

In Conclusion

- The determinants of health: a framework for SEIA
- Health indicators can be used in all six steps.
- Indicator data available from Statistics Canada, GNWT and local sources.
- Health impact assessment can predict (qualitatively or quantitatively) how these indicators will change with the project, taking into consideration that the social environment is dynamic

References

- Canadian Handbook on Health Impact Assessment (CD)
- Useful websites:
 - Public Health Agency of Canada:
 - www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/determinants/index.html
 - Health Canada:
 - www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ehas
 - Statistics Canada Health Indicators database:
 - www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-221-XIE/00604/tables.htm