

Community Health Nursing Today

By Mrs. Kasturi Sunder Rao

EVERY NATION has to be healthy for its economic progress as the adage goes "HEALTH IS WEALTH". Therefore, "HEALTH" is the most fundamental and basic requisite for man. It is his vital and precious possession. Man's happiness, his activities and his destiny, are shaped and influenced by the degree of his health status. As he lives in a community we come across the term "COMMUNITY HEALTH".

"Community Health"

Community is a population consisting of several groups of people living in a definite geographic area. The groups of people comprise, people representing different values, goals, beliefs, interests, religion, etc. and also consisting of children, expectant and non-expectant mothers, males and females, young, old, sick and healthy. Thus Community represents a Society at large.

What is Health? The definition of health by WHO is wellknown and familiar to all of us as health workers.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease. In modern terms, Health is referred to as a sound mind, in a sound body, in a sound family, in a sound community. This shows that there are several dimensions to the word "Health" such as physical, mental, social and also expresses their interrelatedness. To these three important components a fourth component "spiritual" also has to be added, to make total health of a man a rich and fuller one. (Park, 1972).

WHO emphasises that every individual has a right to attain optimum health or positive health. To attain this optimum health, it is thought that every individual born is considered a valuable possession to the Community.

However the standard of health differs from person to person, community to community and country to country. Health is not static but it can be referred to a swinging pendulum subject to continuous changes and adjustment by the man to his environment. Hence

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one can say that there are certain factors which are vital for the achievement of optimum health of man.

Park (1972) states there are five essential factors that are considered in relation to optimum health level namely: (A) HEREDITY (B) ENVIRONMENT (C) DIFFERENT WAYS OF LIVING (D) ECONOMIC STATUS (E) HEALTH SERVICES.

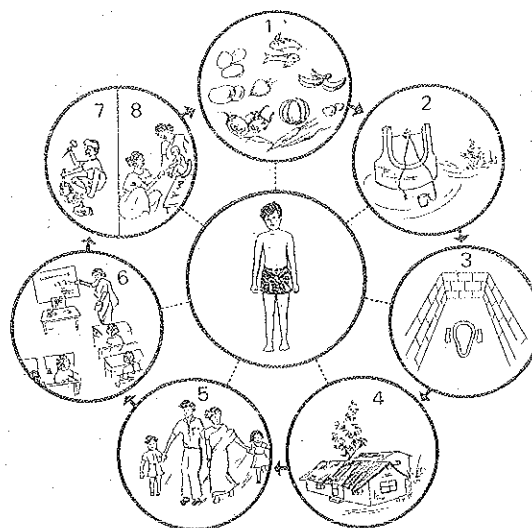
All these factors are interrelated and are very essential for the maintenance of the health of a man. If any one of these factors is disturbed it results in ill-health. This concept is illustrated in diagram—No. 1.

A. HEREDITY: Today the medical experts have found out that there are many diseases known to be of genetic origin such as mental retardation, some type of epilepsy, etc. so if this factor is kept in mind, people can avoid certain defects.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: This has two components like internal and external environmental factors. These have a great bearing on man's total health and well being. The internal environment of man is referred to the physiological mechanism of the human body whereas the external environment deals with three components namely, (i) Physical environment, (ii) Biological environment and (iii) Social environment.

Diagram No. 1

FACTORS ESSENTIAL FOR OPTIMUM HEALTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL ILLUSTRATING CONCEPT OF TOTAL HEALTH



1. BALANCED DIET
2. GOOD WATER SUPPLY
3. SAFE DISPOSAL OF WASTE
4. GOOD HOUSING
5. SMALL FAMILY
6. GOOD EDUCATION
7. OCCUPATION
8. HEALTH SERVICE