Urbanization and Health: challenges and promises

Wilson Centre Seminar on Capitol Hill
“Improving Health Outcomes for the Slum Dwellers and the Urban Poor
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This year...

- **1 billion people** will wake up in an urban slum.

- **170 million urban residents** will not have access to a latrine.

- Nearly **1.2 million people** will die from urban air pollution.
Urbanization trends

- Over half the world’s population now lives in cities

- By 2030, six out of 10 people will live in cities, rising to 7 out of 10 by 2050

- Today, a moral and political imperative: addressing urbanization and health is vital to ensure equity and reduce poverty
Urbanization trends and projections

Urban population, millions

- More developed countries
- Less developed countries


Population in millions: 0, 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500, 3000, 3500, 4000

Graph showing the urban population trends and projections for more developed and less developed countries from 1950 to 2030.
One billion people live in slums

Urban Slum Incidence, 2001
In Sub-Saharan Africa 67% of the urban population lives in slums…

…while in the Eastern Mediterranean and South Asia nearly 50% do

Urban settings and health

Cities confronted by a triple threat:

– *infectious diseases* exacerbated by poor living conditions;

– *noncommunicable diseases* and conditions fueled by tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and harmful use of alcohol; and

– *injuries, road accidents, violence and crime.*
Higher Burden of TB in Urban India

Death from urban air pollution
Nutrition, urban settings, and health

- Changes in food supply and demand resulting in changes to dietary patterns and lifestyles:
  - Energy-dense diets
  - Less active lifestyle

- Access and availability of healthy foods:
  - Forced reliance on local corner stores
  - Overreliance on fast food restaurants
Transport

- Physical inactivity → 1.9 million deaths per year and a loss of 19 million years of healthy life
- Traffic injuries → 1.2 million deaths per year
Unfair differences in people’s health

Intra-urban health differences exist in all cities:

- Male life expectancy in Calton is 82; in Lenzie it is 54. These are two wards in Glasgow, Scotland only 15 kilometres apart.

- In Nairobi, a child born in a slum is four times more likely to die before the age of 5 than his compatriot born kilometres away.
Urban inequities are significant

Under five mortality per 1,000 live births

Source: DHS 2003-2005
Health equity analysis

Prevalence of child stunting (height-for-age < 2 sd)

AFRICA

AMERICAS

ASIA

EUROPE
Inter-city health differentials: concern in developed countries

Mortality rate per 100,000 population

Source: US Big Cities Health Inventory, NACCHO 2007
New York City

Population living in poverty (quartiles)  AIDS deaths per 100,000 population (quartiles)

Urban TB, Japan 2006

Tuberculosis notification rate

Source: Research Institute of Tuberculosis, Kiyose, Japan
2010 Year for urbanization and health

World Health Day
Awareness

Global Report
How-to-guide

Global Forum
Policy Commitment
World Health Day 2010
More than 1500 cities participating

1000 CITIES MAP

COUNTRIES & AREAS 138
CITIES 1543

EXPLORE THE MAP
25 cities in the US signed up
US support for urbanization and health
Conclusion

- Virtually all population growth will be in urban areas over the next 30 years.
- Global poverty is concentrating in cities.
- Urbanization can have positive and negative impacts on health.
- Action is needed now to ensure cities are safe and healthy.