



Foundations of Public Health

Part III: Factors Related to Human Health

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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Introduction

People's health is strongly influenced by where they live, work and play. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies environmental exposures as the cause of many widespread health problems. Environmental health science focuses on identifying and reducing environmental factors that contribute to disease, including, but not restricted to, climate change, air and water quality, food safety, infectious disease, chemicals in consumer products, and work-related exposures. Environmental health science considers these factors in conjunction with genetics and social factors such as poverty and racism, which influence the health effects of environmental factors. Environmental health concerns itself with health across the life course, considering exposures and health effects from the prenatal period through adulthood, and from one generation to the next.

This module provides an introduction to selected major environmental health concepts across the lifespan and across the globe.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this module, the student will be able to:

- Describe the role of environmental health as a factor in the burden of disease.
- Identify several of the major environmental determinants of health and disease.
- Using the exposure-disease conceptual model, outline the relationship between hazard and health outcome for several environmental hazards.
- Discuss the influence of susceptibility, based on a hazard's biological mode of action and vulnerability on health risks for major environmental determinants of human disease.
- Describe the disparate environmental health exposures and outcomes in low income and communities of color.