Discussion 16

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Health is an umbrella term that can be described as the complete wellbeing of an individual both physically and emotionally. In the video, “Sick Around America,” it was highlighted that due to the economic recession, many people were left jobless and therefore, lost health insurance.(“Sick Around America,” n.d.). Furthermore, several health insurance companies rejected the people who have diabetes, or cardiovascular diseases. According to the functionalist perspective, disease and illness endanger society’s survival (Stam, 2000). Thus, a dysfunctional healthcare system can hinder social functioning and a country’s progress.

Although, socioeconomic stratification is a major factor that influences the health of an individual, yet factors like race and ethnicity also influence an individual’s health. The author, Eileen, in her research paper, also discussed that mounting evidence indicates that although gender relations effect the expression of biological traits however, sex-associated biological characters can play a huge role in amplifying gender differences in health (Anderson & National Research Council (US) Panel on Race, 2004). For instance, there is a high prevalence of needle-stick injuries among females than in males and therefore, the occurrence of HIV infection due to needle-stick injuries among females is more. Thus, it is evident that gender does impact the health of an individual.

While discussing the influence of race and ethnicity on an individual’s health, it has been observed that unlike gender, race is not firmly biologically based but it is a construct of human variability that is based on a perceived difference in physical appearance. Owing to the increase in the racial inequalities in health, the definition of ethnicity has come under scientific scrutiny. Several studies conducted on racial disparities highlight that disadvantages in health exist for different ethnicities. The author also discussed that multiple studies have revealed the differences in major reasons of death such as diabetes or terminal stroke among different ethnicities. The research paper highlights that the age-adjusted mortality rate from the most common causes of death for African Americans is 1.4 times greater as compared to Caucasians (Blazer & Hernandez, 2006). Also, African American people are very less likely to survive to the middle age as compared to other ethnicities and even if they do survive, they develop multiple health issues.

Thus, it is undeniably true that factors like ethnicity and socioeconomic conditions influence the chances of an individual getting sick and dying.

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