

Health Factors that Affect Rural Communities

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ABOUT THE STUDY

The interdisciplinary study of health and the provision of medical care in rural areas is known as rural health or rural medicine. Geographics, midwifery, nursing, sociology, economics, and telehealth or telemedicine are just a few of the disciplines that are included in the idea of rural health. According to research, people who live in rural areas have distinct healthcare demands than those who live in urban areas, and access to healthcare is frequently a problem in these locations [1]. Geographical, demographic, socioeconomic, job and individual health factors all contribute to these variations. For instance, many rural areas include a sizable population of children and the elderly. Such settlements have a high dependency ratio since there are so few people, who are working (aged between 20 to 50 years old). When compared to urban residents, those who live in rural areas typically have worse socioeconomic circumstances, lower levels of education, greater rates of tobacco and alcohol use, and higher death rates. In many regions of the world, rural residents have high rates of poverty, which is one of the major social determinants of health [2,3].

Health determinants

Access to healthcare: In comparison to their metropolitan counterparts, people in rural areas typically have less access to healthcare. The lack of medical personnel, mental health services, and healthcare facilities in these areas result in less frequent preventive treatment and longer emergency response times [4]. Due to a lack of medical experts, rural populations now receive healthcare through unorthodox channels, like doctor consultations over the phone or online and mobile preventative care and treatment programmes. The number of medical students from rural areas has increased, and financial incentives for rural practices have been improved in an effort to draw health professionals to remote areas [5].

Working conditions: Compared to urban regions, rural communities frequently provide less employment options and greater unemployment rates. Numerous professions, such as farming, forestry, fishing, manufacturing, and mining, are frequently

physically demanding. Because of the usage of sophisticated technology, exposure to chemicals, long work hours, noise pollution, harsher temperatures, and physical labor, these vocations frequently come with significant health and safety risks. Consequently, rural work forces report greater rates of fatal injuries [6].

Personal health: The health and anticipated longevity of people in rural locations are also influenced by lifestyle and personal health decisions. Compared to urban populations, rural dwellers report higher rates of smoking, passive smoking exposure, and obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention research, these individuals also lead more sedentary lifestyles. Rural communities generally have low rates of fruit and vegetable eating, even in areas where farming is common. Rural locations have lower homicide rates than urban ones, but poisoning, suicide, and injury deaths are much more common [7].

Physical environment: In many societies, rural health may suffer from a lack of vital infrastructure and development. For people who reside in these areas, getting to clinics and hospitals is becoming more and more difficult due to the physical isolation of some rural villages and the lack of infrastructure. Poor wastewater treatment, unpaved roads, and exposure to agricultural pesticides are further environmental concerns for rural residents. Reduced water quality and more crowded housing are two characteristics that have an impact on disease control in rural and remote areas [8].

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