

PRACTICE OBSERVED

Practice Research

Deprivation and health in one general practice

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Abstract
A detailed comparison made in late 1984 of 587 matched pairs of patients from neighbouring deprived and more endowed urban communities...

Introduction
The Black report concluded that people in social classes IV and V had a lower state of health than those in social class I...

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differences were ascribed primarily to a self-perpetuating cycle of socioeconomic deprivation. The recommendations, relating mainly to social engineering, were not endorsed by the government because of the enormous cost...

The practice
Our modern practice, housed in central premises, comprises six general practitioners one semi-retired, trainees, and paramedical and support staff...

Method

The sampling frame was the age-sex register of the practice on 30 September 1984. The sample of "deprived" patients comprised the 587 patients from the nearby Blue Hill council estate...

TABLE I—Socioeconomic data (1981 census)

Table with 4 columns: Socioeconomic data, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees, Blue Hill, and %.

Note: The unemployment figures refer to individuals, the remainder to households. Source: Cleveland County Council Research and Intelligence Unit.

TABLE II—Comparison of recorded morbidity (587 pairs)

Table with 5 columns: No. of patients with at least one occurrence, No. of total occurrences, Relative based on health service deprived controls, and Significance.

*Rate of total occurrences expressed as percentage
†10% level, 0.05 < p < 0.1
‡5% level, 0.01 < p < 0.05
§1% level, 0.001 < p < 0.01
||0.1% level, p < 0.001

All data were abstracted from medical records, data entered after 30 September 1984 were disregarded. For all patients the number of entries on the Department of Health and Social Security blue sheet FPI11G "summary of important illnesses and investigations" was noted...

Results
Table II shows overall results on six criteria of recorded morbidity. More detailed analyses by sex and age were also made. The deprived group exhibited almost three times as much mental illness as the control group...

For each patient under 16 the details of childhood immunisations were noted and a percentage immunised "score" calculated on a points system taking account of age, prior infection, and contraindication.

Fifty deprived patients had one recorded non-attendance and 76 had more than one...

single (14 against 5) and separated or divorced (19 against 4). Despite similar total numbers of unmarried women under 65 (56 deprived, 59 controls)...

TABLE IV—Adult women: pregnancy data

Table with 6 columns: Age last birthday, Deprived, Controls, Deprived, Controls, Deprived, Controls.

*Total No of stillbirths were: deprived 1, controls 1
†5% level, 0.01 < p < 0.05
‡1% level, 0.001 < p < 0.01
§0.1% level, p < 0.001

Discussion
Although our local study relates to socioeconomic deprivation rather than social class, its findings closely parallel those of the Black report with added emphasis of certain aspects...

TABLE V—Adult women: cervical smears and cervical cytology recording (last five years)

Table with 6 columns: Age last birthday, Deprived, Controls, Deprived, Controls, Deprived, Controls.

*5% level, 0.01 < p < 0.05
NA, not applicable

TABLE VI—Adult women: health care referrals (last five years)

Table with 5 columns: Age group, No. of pairs, No. of deprived, No. of controls, Significance.

**5% level, 0.01 < p < 0.05
†0.1% level, p < 0.001

antennas: highly significant; and fewer deprived women had had urine analysis probably significant; than controls.

anxiety, personality disorders, and organic psychosis. Multiple mental syndromes arise from the interpersonal conflicts that breed in crowded conditions and deprivation...

a half times as many children as their controls, despite higher unemployment, less money, and poorer living conditions. It seems highly improbable that all these babies were planned when they were conceived...

only for that patient but also for every member of that household. Thus preventive care may be discussed and proffered for every household member no matter who consults.

Other preventive health care criteria were worse for the deprived group where differences were found. In particular, childhood immunisations were far worse, in both quantity and timing.

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100 YEARS AGO

By good luck, rather than by good management, Western London possesses, in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, and Regent's Park, two magnificent open spaces. Every year, the remaining population which surges about these islands of green appears to understand better their great value as health giving and health restoring agencies...