

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Towards environmental equity through health impact assessment

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INTERESTING.
THE GAP BETWEEN
RICH AND POOR
IS NOT AS GREAT
AS WE THOUGHT



Nicholas
31 DEC 01



Environmental equity

- equity = distributional justice
- justice is qualitative
- disproportionate environmental impact – an oxymoron?
- tackling environmental inequity must imply levelling up to the standards of the best



Bottom line: a healthy
society is a fair and
just society



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What is HIA?

A combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population



Important characteristics of HIA

- Ideally prospective
- Decision support tool, not evaluation method
- Key output = a set of evidence based recommendations
- Trade-off between brevity and rigour



3 levels of HIA

- ***Desktop*** – usually <1 week
- ***Rapid*** – usually 1 week - 2 months
- ***Comprehensive*** – 2-6 months+

Main differences – depth of *evidence review*; type(s) of *fieldwork* and of qualitative / quantitative *methods*



Uses of HIA

- **creation of healthy public policies / projects**
- **social and economic development**
- health advocacy
- advocacy for disadvantaged groups
- personal development
- partnership building



Policy context

- EIA / HPP
- 1980s - 'LDCs'
- 1993 - Manchester 2nd runway
- 1993 - British Columbia
- Mid-90s - Australasia and Europe
- Liverpool Public Health Observatory
- Late 90s - WHO / European Union
- IMPACT
- USA - early 21c – CA, MN

HEALTHIMPACT PROJECT

ADVANCING SMARTER POLICIES FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

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Grant Awarded to Conduct HIA on Climate Change Legislation

The California Department of Public Health will conduct the first study of its kind on a

WHAT IS HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

To stem the rising tide of chronic disease and create safe, thriving communities, health needs to be regularly factored into policy and program decisions in sectors that do not traditionally focus on health outcomes.



A health impact assessment (HIA) is a flexible, data-driven approach that identifies the health consequences of new policies, and develops practical strategies to enhance their health benefits and minimize adverse effects. [more »](#)



World Health
Organization



Commission on
Social Determinants of Health

Closing the gap in a generation

Health equity through action on
the social determinants of health





Closing the Gap in a Generation – key themes

- Improve daily living conditions
- **Tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources**
- *Measure and understand the problem and assess the impact of action*



Closing the Gap in a Generation – **HIA recommendations**

- competent, regular health equity impact assessment of *all policy-making and market regulation* should be institutionalized nationally and internationally
- Institutionalize and strengthen technical capacities in health equity impact assessment of *all international and national economic agreements*
- National and local governments should build capacity to use health equity impact assessment as *a standard protocol in all major policy-making*



The emphasis needs to shift from risk factors to root causes

WHO Discussion Paper. Priorities for Research on Equity and Health. September 2009



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Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California

Laura Pulido

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Geographic studies of environmental racism have focused on the spatial relationships between environmental hazards and community demographics in order to determine if inequity exists. Conspicuously absent within this literature, however, is any substantive discussion of racism. This paper seeks to address this shortcoming in two ways. I first investigate how racism is understood and expressed in the literature. I argue that although racism is rarely explicitly discussed, a normative conceptualization of racism informs the research. Not only is this prevailing conception overly narrow and restrictive, it also denies the spatiality of racism. Consequently, my second goal is to demonstrate how various forms of racism contribute to environmental racism. In addition to conventional understandings of racism, I emphasize white privilege, a highly structural and spatial form of racism. Using Los Angeles as a case study, I examine how whites have secured relatively cleaner environments by moving away from older industrial cores via suburbanization. I suggest that the historical processes of suburbanization and decentralization are instances of white privilege and have contributed to contemporary patterns of environmental racism. Thus, in addition to interpreting racism as discriminatory facility siting and malicious intent, I also examine a less conscious but hegemonic form of racism, white privilege. Such an approach not only allows us to appreciate the range of racisms that shape the urban landscape, but also illuminates the functional relationships between places—in particular between industrial zones and residential suburbs, and how their development reflects and reproduces a particular racist formation. *Key Words:* environmental racism, Los Angeles, white privilege, suburbanization.



Refocusing upstream

...a strong case for ***prevention***
and the need for more
regulatory and public scrutiny
of ***production decisions***

Rachel Morello-Frosch (2002)

Discrimination and the political economy of
environmental inequality. Environment and
Planning C, 20, 477-496



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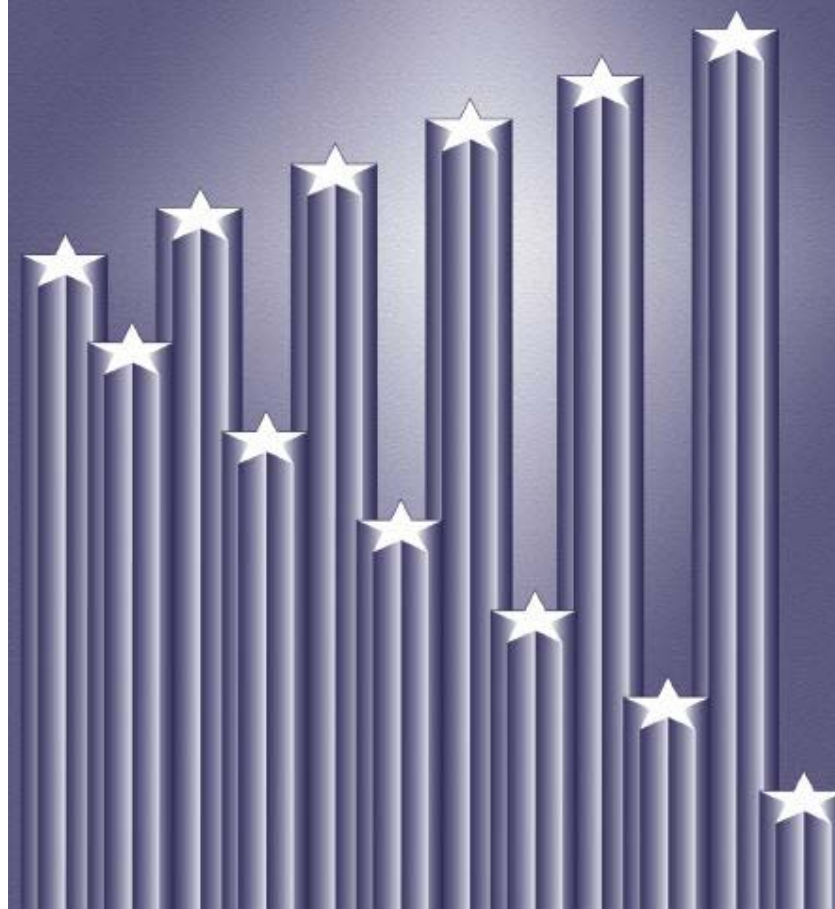


Some IMPACT HIA projects

- Foresight Vehicle Initiative
- Castlefields - housing regeneration
- Policy HIA for the EU – European Employment Strategy
- Capacity building in Liverpool
- Antisocial behaviour - Citysafe
- Community HIA methodology
- 'Making it Better'
- Birmingham International Airport



European Policy
Health Impact Assessment



METHODOLOGY



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL



Mental Well-being Impact Assessment: A Toolkit
'A Living and Working Document'



**Liverpool 08 European Capital of Culture:
Mental Well-being Impact Assessment**



Two perspectives of HIA

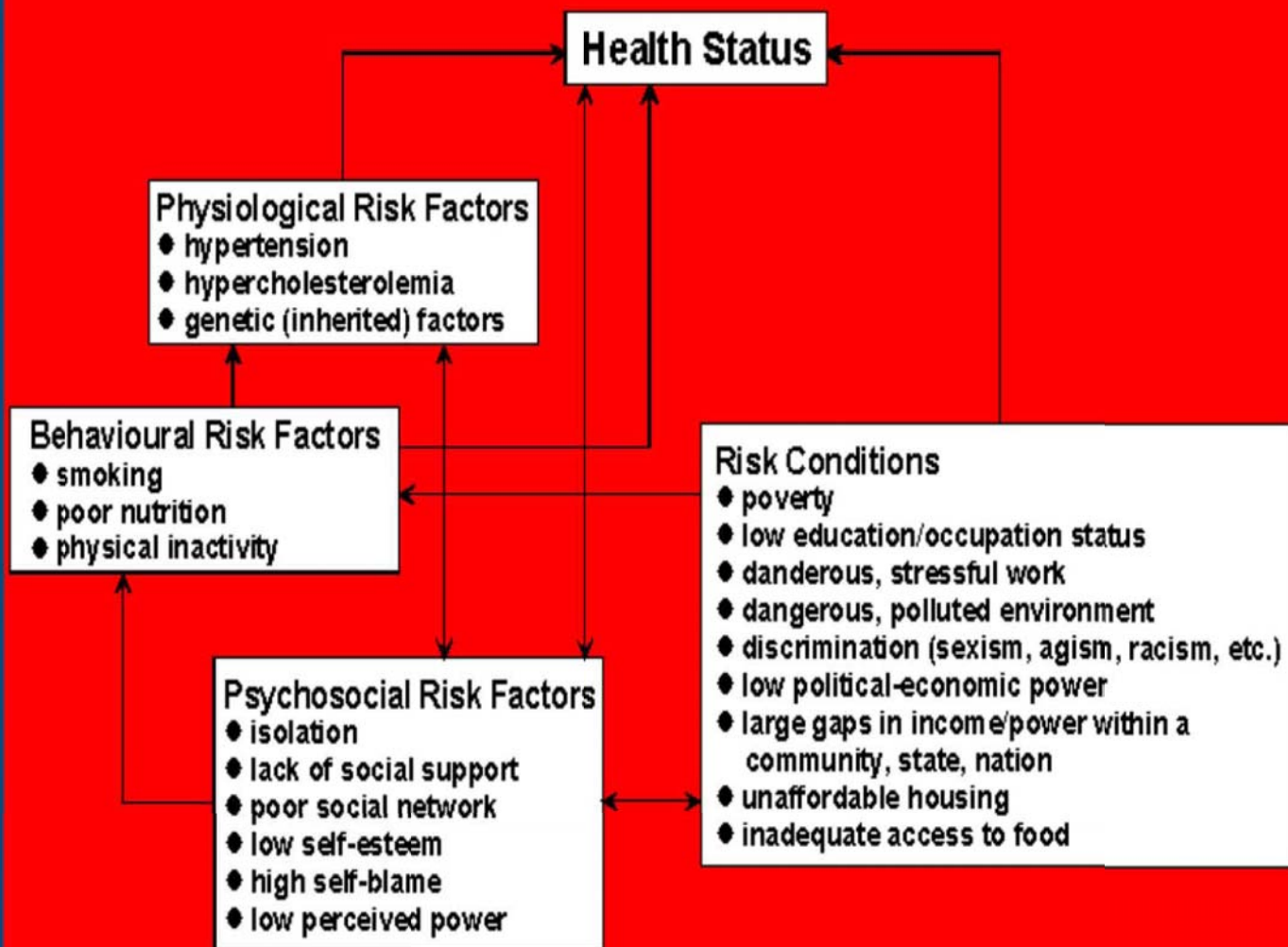
	Broad perspective	Tight perspective
View of health	Holistic	Definition and observation
Disciplinary roots	Sociology, epidemiology	Epidemiology, toxicology
Ethos	Democratic	Technocratic
Quantification	In general terms	Towards exact measurement
Types of evidence	Key informant data	Measurements
Precision	Low	High

Source: National Assembly for Wales (1999) Developing health impact assessment in Wales.

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The Socioenvironmental Approach to Health



Ron Labonte. Inequalities in Health in the City of Toronto. 1991



The Merseyside approach to HIA - 1

- Screening – which policies require HIA?
- Scoping – planning the HIA: steering group; boundaries; select assessor; outputs
- Policy analysis
- Profiling of communities
- ***Collect impact prediction data from stakeholders and key informants***
- Identify health determinants affected



The Merseyside approach to HIA - 2

- Assess new and published evidence
- Establish priority impacts
- Recommend and justify options for action
- Appraise assessment
- Negotiate favoured options
- Implement and monitor
- Evaluate and document



Data collection from stakeholders and key informants

RAPID

- Stakeholder workshops

COMPREHENSIVE

- Stakeholder workshops
- Interviews / focus groups
- Delphi exercises
- Scenarios
- Mathematical / economic modelling

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Health inequality in HIA

- inequality a **screening** (selection) criterion
- vulnerable groups identified in **profiling** and **policy analysis**
- **distributional impacts** (as well as population impacts) identified
- **recommendations** take account of impact inequalities
- **monitoring** and **evaluation** based on inequality indicators and outcomes



Equity in HIA

- choice of paradigm (expertist vs participatory)
- public involvement in HIA steering groups
- ‘lay’ people as stakeholders and key informants
- **equitable valuation of lay evidence and of evidence on lay priorities**
- ‘bias to the poor’ in recommendations



(How) Can H(E)IA
incorporate the
assessment of root
causes alongside the
assessment of risk
factors?



Some global public policy determinants of health 1

- Processes and structures of global power relations
- Global power imbalances in the policy-making process
- ‘sites and forms of power which operate beyond the scope of democratic control’



Some global public policy determinants of health 2

- Impact of global / cross-border flows on health (care) determinants
- Macroeconomic and other policies of multilateral agencies
- IMF lending conditionalities
- Human rights impacts of global public policies

Health impact assessment, human rights and global public policy: a critical appraisal

Alex Scott-Samuel^a & Eileen O'Keefe^b

Abstract Public policy decisions in both the social and economic spheres have enormous impact on global public health. As a result of this, and of the skewed global distribution of power and resources, health impact assessment (HIA) potentially has a key role to play in foreign policy-making and global public policy-making.

Governments, multilateral bodies and transnational corporations need to be held to account for the health impacts of their policies and practices. One route towards achieving this objective involves the inclusion of human rights assessments within HIA. International commitments to human rights instruments and standards can be used as a global auditing tool.

Methodological issues may limit the effectiveness of HIA in promoting health equity. These issues include the use of procedures that favour those holding power in the policy process or the use of procedures that fail to apply values of equity and participation. The identification and production of evidence that includes the interests of less powerful groups is a priority for HIA and would be furthered if a human rights-based method of HIA were developed.

Because HIA considers all types of policies and examines all potential determinants of health, it can play a part when foreign policy is developed and global decisions are made to treat people as rights holders. Since the human right to health is shaped by the determinants of health, developing links between the right to health assessment (that is, an assessment of the impact of policies on the right to health) and HIA — as recently proposed by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health — could strengthen the development of foreign policy and global decisions. Such links should be pursued and applied to the development of foreign policy and to the operation of multilateral bodies.

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT AS AN ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND: THE CASE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Eileen O'Keefe and Alex Scott-Samuel

Health impact assessment (HIA) is both an effective tool for promoting healthy public policies and one that has the potential to help hold accountable for their actions those who create unhealthy public policies. This article identifies some of the issues that arise in considering the application of HIA to the operation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), especially in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. The authors do this in the belief that the IMF's lending conditionalities and macroeconomic policies constitute an important social determinant of health. The recent report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health has created helpful and timely policy space for the development of a health equity- and human rights-oriented accountability framework for the IMF.

IMF and World Bank economic policy in the 1980s and early 1990s took little account of how these policies would potentially impact poor people in Africa. Many health and education systems began to break down. And all of this came just as AIDS began to take its deadly toll.

Commission for Africa, *Our Common Interest* (1, p. 23)



Methodological controversies

- science and politics
- value-free and value-laden
- holism and reductionism
- qualitative and quantitative
- expertism and participation
- duration and depth
- equity and inequality



Gaps in current practice

- limited application - especially re public policy
- *macroeconomic policy*
- *human rights*
- *foreign policy*
- *trade policy*
- *social and gender policy*



Gaps in current theory

- distributional effects poorly operationalised
- political determinants of health insufficiently acknowledged, *eg power, ideology, class, interest groups, institutions*
- participatory research
- feminist research, *eg intersectionality*

Consultation Document





Capacity building

- a limiting factor
- training
- advocacy
- policy development
- organisation development



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