

Exercise 2: Frameworks and Determinants

After completing this exercise, you will be able to: (1) discuss the range of factors (determinants) that may be related to a variety of disease conditions and levels of health that may be observed in different populations; (2) explain how the multiple determinants associated with any specific condition may be related to each other in a conceptual framework.

Reading: Krieger, N. Epidemiology and the web of causation: has anyone seen the spider? (1994). *Social Science and Medicine* . 39(7), 887-903.

Look at the matrix. The first column lists a range of determinants that may be associated with the health and disease of certain populations. The first row lists some health problems. Follow the steps below in carrying out this exercise:

1. Select one health problem from the first row that you know something about in terms of its "causes."
2. For each of the determinants listed, consider whether the determinant plays any role in contributing to the health problem in a population. If it does not have any effect on the problem, place a minus sign (-) in the box in the matrix and go to the next determinant.
3. For those determinants that you think will have an effect on the health problem, consider whether they operate as an underlying determinant or a proximate determinant. If underlying, put a "U" in the box; if proximate, put a "P" in the box.
4. Next, for the selected health problem, draw a conceptual diagram showing how these determinants may be (causally) related to each other and to the selected health problem.
5. Based on your diagram, explore two questions: How might you design a study to test whether one or more of these factors might have a "causal" relationship in a particular population? Does your diagram suggest where to intervene and what intervention(s) might be most important in reducing the health problem?