Section D

Determinants of Adult Health and Development
Determinants of Health Disparities

- Disparities reflect groups’ relative social position which leads to inequalities in access to resources of all types.

- This is called structured inequality—recall the Link and Phelan (1995) we read for the third lecture.

- Unequal social positions expose people to “risk of risks” and so are a fundamental cause of disease.
Health Trajectories

- Can conceptualize health trajectories: early experiences and health influence later experiences and health

- Risks accumulate over the life course

- Key issue for public health is how to deflect or alter trajectories
Schematic Diagram of Health Trajectories
Early Influences on Adult Health

- The effects we’ve discussed in the fetal period, infancy, childhood, and adolescence carry over into adulthood
Early Influences on Health: Direct and Mediated

- Fetal development (Barker)
- Childhood adversity
- Health behaviors learned in adolescence
- Cognitive and social development in early childhood influence school attainment, which influences adult occupational position and social relationships
Childhood adversity increases odds of ischemic heart disease in adulthood.
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Child Development and Educational Attainment

Content for this slide to come
From Cognitive Development to Chronic Disease

- Picture of pathway from cognitive development to chronic disease via adult attainment

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Health Influences in Adulthood

- Reflect continuation of earlier trajectories (previous slide)
- Include new sources and types of risk (e.g., occupational hazards, demands from social network)
- May be exogenous (sudden job loss, natural disaster, displacement)
Two Key Domains of Adult Life

1. Work
2. Family life
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Content for this slide to come
Final Points

- Health trajectories in adulthood set stage for later life—important in aging societies

- Social change due to economic development and Westernization changes nature of adult life course and nature of health risks and conditions
  - Increasing age at marriage
    - Partly due to longer education
  - Declines in fertility
  - Differences in jobs
  - Differences in gender roles