

Research Methods in Health Promotion
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Lecture 10: Social Science Techniques

So, hello and welcome to the lecture 10 of this course. Now, today in this lecture I will be talking on the Social Science Techniques. Now, see to understand the you know the theories and models of health behavior, you have to know some basic concepts you know you should have some basic understandings of sociology, psychology and definitely some understanding of behavioral economics. So, you know in last few lectures I was just talking to you and you know I discussed that what is the importance of health behavior ecological models of health behavior we discussed. So, how actually we can, you know as a health promotion expert we have to understand that how, what are the different factors which actually influences somebody's behavior. So, for that some you know knowledge and some concepts of sociology, psychology and behavioral economics are actually necessary.

So, we will talk about the sociology and psychology in public health and behavioral economics and health. Now, sociology in public health. So, the sociological analysis of health and illness can be traced back to the beginnings of sociology as an area of systematic knowledge in the late 1800. Now, there is influence of cultural, socioeconomic and political conditions in the community on individuals social action.

We all know that we are always influenced by different socioeconomic factors, the cultural factors and the you know the political context. So, this is important that we have to understand. Now, there are two distinctive contributions of medical sociology to the study of health and illness in general and also public health in particular. Now, the thing is the first contribution is the systematic examination of the link between individual and community and the social organizational factors that shape the behavior of groups. So, this is very important.

The link between individual with the community and also with the you know the society and organization, the social organizational factors which actually shape the behavior of groups. Now, second main contribution is that health care systems are organizations you know embedded within larger institutions which have been shaped by historical precedence and operate within a specific cultural context. So, what is happening you know the health care system itself the things are changing and the same way different policy related to health systems is also actually getting changed. So, in past we have seen that these are the things, these were the issues you know the utilization of health care services. So, in fact, if now in 2023 and before you know I mean 20, 30 or 40 years back if you see the utilization of health care services were not same as it is on today.

Why because you know people you know they have their own views, they influenced by families as I said their friends, their community. So, what happened they have they certain in the cultural context also you have to remember. So, now, there are people who think that yeah if I suffer from you know some disease I should directly go to the you know the hospital to the doctors. But you know many years back the you know the things were not the same as it is on today because you know some due to cultural and some you know their own perceptions and views you know communities own perceptions and views are very important. And you know we are always influenced by our society members.

So, at that point of you know many years back if somebody suffering from you know disease. So, the utilization of health care services it was not like yeah I am suffering from this disease I will directly go to hospital. Their access to health services and you know the where actually they used to go to access the treatment were different and now if you see the things have changed completely. Now, the most significant social aspects that exemplify the link between individuals and groups in the context of public health are the cultural and social class influences on health related behavior of individuals and communities. We all know the different cultures have you know different they have their own cultural values they own they have their own cultural beliefs.

You know there are some community who still they are vegetarian. So, this is something years after years they have been doing the same thing like you know families after families they years after years they have been doing the same thing like you know families after families they are you know the vegetarian. So, the thing is that they are you know they are surrounded with some cultural factors. Same the social class influences now see we have read so many articles and so many evidences are there the different socio economic class you know they have different you know behaviors they perform they have different you know views they have different ways of accessing health services. So, these are important then you know the lifestyles also.

In lifestyle if you see the link between individuals and groups you know like for example, lifestyle factors you know we nowadays we are often talking about lifestyle modifications or the lifestyle factors. So, like good dietary habits, regular physical activity also you know some bad habit bad health behaviors that is consumption of tobacco then alcohol consumption. So, these are some lifestyle factors now what happened in the peer groups you will see there many you know the young people youth in fact, the adolescent. So, if he you know if he or she see that my you know peer groups they are they are also smoking they are also consuming alcohol. So, what happens their lifestyles is also actually getting influenced by their peer groups.

The social networks you know if you see they are you know they have the some certain kind of social network you know the friend circle the social groups they have. So, every time in fact, our health behavior you know the health behaviors are lifestyles they are actually getting

basically influenced. Now and the creation and transformation of healthcare system why because again the same thing is one thing as I said utilization of healthcare services and you know still there are some community who think that if I suffer from you know certain disease many community you know many a society they have that if I suffer from if anybody suffer from any kind of disease. So, I will they are very particular that where they will go and from where they will try to receive treatment. So, it is all about that you know what happens the social aspects when we talk about now they always link they always connections between the individuals and groups considering the public health areas I am talking about.

Now, the cultural values rooted in ethnic and religious ethos together with social class differences it shape peoples beliefs and attitudes on health and illness and their lifestyles as I said the cultural values. There are some family cultural values you know years after years you know generations after generations you know some beliefs they have kept and they are maintaining that as I you know just I have given one example regarding the vegetarian and the non vegetarian community. Apart from that also you know if a family if a family member suffers from a certain disease then actually what is the first step they do what is the first thing they are going to do. Maybe you know some home base remedies still you know in some families they are customs you know they are cultural you know beliefs you can say and also the practice that for this particular disease you do not have to go to hospital you do not have to go to a doctor. We have some you know home base things that we can apply or you can have and you will be ok.

So, you do not have to go to any hospital or to the doctors. So, all these you know these cultural values and the religious ethos together with the social class differences always will find different perceptions you know the different beliefs in different socio economic class it varies. So, all these things what happen it influences people's beliefs and perceptions and the attitudes which is related to health and illness and their lifestyles. Now, healthcare systems originate develop and change as part of the interplay of socio economic cultural and political factors. Culture is a key term that refers to values and beliefs emanating from one's ethnic and religious ethos typically transmitted across generations as part of the communities identity or design for living.

We have just now discussed there is some cultural belief now you know it you know it is getting transmitted from one generation to another generation. So, in addition to the influence of the physical and socio economic environment on the risk of infectious diseases and chronic illness the impact of cultural and public health is manifold this is very important. If you know there are some sociologists you know they often they keep on doing research they keep on doing studies on the impact or influence of culture on the human health on the public health or the access to healthcare services. And it has been you know seen that the impact of culture on public health is huge and it is manifested in at least three ways we can say health behavior that is what people do regarding health risk ok. Health attitudes and beliefs that is how people feel and think about health and illness.

So, what actually they do what they think about the different health risk factors or what they do regarding the health risk and the beliefs and attitudes that how people you know how they actually you know perceive different health problems different illnesses and people's perceptions of and responses to health authorities public health guidelines and recommendations. You know we have different guidelines for different you know disease for different emergencies you know if like you know COVID pandemic. So, in COVID pandemic what happened there were different recommendations and public health guidelines. So, what happened how people actually perceive those just you know other in vaccine you know there were some people like they were like you know nothing will happen even if I take vaccine it is not you know necessary that I will not be in future I will not be suffering from COVID. So, they had their own perceptions ok.

Then also you know the way they response if the perceptions are different then they will surely they will basically response and behave in that way only ok. You know the vaccine hesitancy there were some people who actually they were denying they denied intake of any COVID-19 vaccines. Why COVID-19 vaccines if you see you know still so many you know vaccines are there for prevention of diseases. Still there are many community you know in their villages are still there where people are still very reluctant to go I mean to take that vaccine they do not allow you know they do not take the children to any health facility to take that particular vaccine. In fact, their response to the health authorities you know their response to the health worker is also very you know different no this is we feel that there is no use of any vaccines even if we take vaccine we will not get any you know benefits.

In fact, there are some people who has if you see different literature there are some people who has said that no if my children take this particular vaccine it will harm him it will harm her. So, different guidelines are there you see in the immunization schedule the governments guidelines are there, but their own perceptions they have their own perceptions and they are you know denying that no we do not need. Government it is guideline government is recommending I mean government is recommending all these you know preventive measures, but we do not think we do not perceive it is not our you know opinion that these things actually work. So, everything you know in the it is not only about the influence of the physical and socioeconomic environment on the risk of infectious disease and chronic illness it is also about their cultural belief and those cultural beliefs you know it is leading them to have different perceptions. The perceptions are different because you know it is getting you know from one generation to another generations it is getting transmitted.

So, that is why they perceive the risk health risk and that is why they perceive the disease and illness and symptoms in a different way and also utilizing the healthcare services in a very different way. Now, cultural norms and traditions also guide peoples preference for some types of health services over others. We all know that here these are the traditions in our in our customs and traditions we do not think that this is required we do not think health this kind of health service we require and they do not prefer you know they do not prefer utilizing those health services. Like you know still in many villages now for a pregnant mother they think

now what is the actual utility of taking these medicines you know what is IFA tablets she is having food in the home, she is having enough food. So, what is there what is the necessary of taking iron and folic acid tablets what is the requirement of taking calcium tablets.

So, there you know generation after generation they have some cultural norms and traditions and they have kept all those norms and traditions very strictly and they completely deny you know utilizing any healthcare services or taking any kind of you know the like for example, just now I have given the calcium tablets or the IFA tablets or the vaccinations. So, any kind of health services be it preventive, be it curative they often deny that no we do not want we do not require rather. So, medical sociology research provides evidence of another significant influence related to, but distinct from culture and what people do about health risks their lifestyle. So, another you know very significant you can say as I have mentioned that medical sociology research they provide evidence of another significant influence related to, but distinct from culture on what people do about health risks is their lifestyle. You know in still if you go to certain tribal community now you will see that they have a particular I mean if you try to make them understand that this is actually you know this habit is not good this is you know the substance use related they have certain kind of their own in their own community and culture they have certain kind of addiction materials which they consume.

And generations after generation they are consuming. So, actually those materials are harming their health, but the thing is they have you know made their lifestyle like this only years after years generations after generation they have kept their lifestyle in this way only. Consumption of any food you know the dietary habits. So, different communities have different dietary habits. So, the lifestyle is itself a very important thing which now sociologists you know the researcher are actually trying to explore trying to understand because in the our lifestyle factors they are very important for our health.

It can increase your health risk also and it can even improve your health it depends what kind of lifestyle you are following. Now, people's lifestyle shapes their patterns of physical activity some people you know have no time for leisure others are sedentary or engaged in extreme sports you will see some go for frequent gym and they do regular exercise. And other hand you will see some are there who are regularly involved in alcohol drinking cigarette smoking. So, their own lifestyle you know they have different people have different lifestyle and that is here actually in this you know the third line I have just given some examples. Now, you can have many examples lifestyle factors and lifestyle determinants have become a very important and burning issue now.

A person's lifestyle is associated with the risk of serious injuries and the likelihood of contracting infectious diseases. As we said that lifestyle itself if you have a good lifestyle you know the good behavior if you are following then it is very good you will not be having any health risk or health disease. But on the other hand if it is actually you know detrimental then you can have the risk of serious disease serious injuries infectious disease and also non

communicable diseases. Now, the influence of social class on health status health behavior access to and use of health services is one of the most examined social influences on health. Now, the social class induced health inequalities can be reduced by instituting health interventions that automatically benefit individuals irrespective of their own resources or behavior.

Now, you see the government you know they are just trying they keep on trying that you know the you know different social class have you know a different access to health services and different access to you know treatment and we often talk about the health inequalities. Now, the thing is that government you know the planners the policymakers they are basically always they are thinking so, that we can reduced reduce that inequality. So, that it can benefit those individuals also who do not have the all the resources you know the money and everything. So, this is important that health inequality has to be reduced. Now, medical sociology applies the full range of sociological approaches and methodological tools to the study of socio economic cultural and demographic characteristics of population and individuals that impact their health.

So, as I said you know the medical sociology and the people who are in medical sociology they are you know doing so, many studies and researches and they are taking so, many initiatives and they have their own methodological tools to conduct all those studies and they are basically focusing on the cultural the socio economic and the demographic characteristics of populations and individuals which can have an impact on their health. Now, psychology in public health just as the subfield of medical sociology plays an important role within the discipline of sociology the most relevant areas of specialization in psychology for public health is health psychology. Now, one of the relevant areas of health psychology for public health is stress management we all know that we are often talking about the stress management. Now, change in health related behavior is another area of work of health psychologists that is relevant to public health the health psychologists you know they are often you know they are thinking they are planning and they are implementing studies and researches and activities on the health related behavior. Now, psychologists apply one or more social cognition theories which is also used in sociology in individual and group therapy interventions like with youth and adults these are just an examples other examples can be there.

So, they are you know they are taking either using individual and group therapy interventions packages with adults with the youth to modify risk taking behaviors such as alcohol drinking and cigarette smoking and to reinforce preventive health behavior such as healthy diet. So, decreasing the adoption of risk taking behaviors decreasing the you know the maintenance of risk taking behaviors and to reinforce to implement the preventive health behaviors like healthy diet or physical activity. Now, very briefly I will just you know talk about some behavioral economics. Now, we all have heard we all know the importance of economics we all know the importance of behavioral economics and health. Now, basically behavioral economics is a field at the intersection of economics and psychology.

So, there is one theory which is standard economic theory now you know they have some assumption that people are very rational and they have the self motive. So, they are completely selfish or they have self motive forward thinking decision makers. Now, you know what happened this standard economic theory they say that people are rational and they do not get easily influenced by some irrational you know external factors and they have their own self motive. Now, behavioral economics it aims to explain why individuals deviate from the assumption of standard economic theory with just now I mentioned and also to use these insights to advance our models of individual behavior. So, with those evidences knowledge and insights we can also have you know we can use those insights to you know modify to think on the advanced level of the model to advance our models of different individual behavior.

Now, by improving the models behavioral economics allows policy makers to design interventions that is health intervention to more effectively achieve policy goals. Now, whenever some policy makings I mean some guidelines are you know generated. So, also at the same point it is not that just we have written ok, we have written and we have generated some guidelines. Parallely we have some goals you know the policy goals that we have to achieve it may be in 5 years, 10 years, 15 years. So, any kind of you know the interventions the packages the policy making things which policymakers generate the important thing is when those policy goals will be achieved.

So, that is why you know the advancing the models by you know what is the aim of behavioral economics in the last slide we saw that we can use those evidences and insights and we can have you know advanced level thinking of the health behavior models and which will actually help the policymakers to develop and design the interventions more effectively. So, that it become more effective to achieve the policy goals. Now, in this way behavioral economics is both descriptive giving us a better picture of what behavior looks like and why it looks that way and prescriptive also why because it is suggest how policy can most effectively impact individual decision making. So, what actually behavioral economics why it is both descriptive and prescriptive in one hand it is descriptive because you are getting the you know the clear picture a very better picture of that what behavior should look like and why it looks that way and prescriptive you know the word itself you can understand prescriptive because it also helps it suggest how policy can most effectively impact individual decision making. There can be so many you know policies are there.

So, we often say you know that no all the policies you know actually it is not getting I mean it is not getting implemented or it is not getting you know adopted by the people relevantly or in a relevant way. So, still there are so many gaps are there you know still the gaps and so, what is happening you know a policy the individual decision making is important that how can we implement those policies. So, that in fact, at individual level also they can have an effective decision making of their own health. Now, regarding incentives see incentives we all know this is a very general thing we all know and incentives it can be reward it can be also punishment like for an example I go to a school and I say that students if every day you if you

take if you eat from your antipoon I mean the home based tiffin which they bring to the school then you will get plus 5 in your a final evaluation paper or you will you know your grades will increase something like that. On the other hand I can also tell them that if you do not eat from your tiffin which you bring from your home then I will punish you I will give you punishment.

So, what happens is people you know the students in fact, why students you can have some different examples we can think like oh if I do this I will get this and if I do not do this oh my god it will be harmful I will get punishment. So, but reward incentives are you know they are natural place to start an investigation of how economic and behavioral economic forces impact health behaviors. Reward incentives show how traditional economic interventions can be improved by insights from behavioral economics. So, it is not about that what traditional you know economic interventions and you know traditional interventions thinkings were there. It can be improved if we go deeply to the concepts of behavioral economics.

Now, in standard economic theory individuals value money and other tangible rewards and engage in efforts to get them. People go to work to earn money and we expect them to work harder when there is more money at stake if I tell you that if you work for more than 5 hours ok. Like for example, in per day you have to work for 6 hours, but if I say an employee that if you work for 8 hours per day then you will get more money I mean you will get more salary. So, what will happen this monetary incentive will motivate him at you know at higher level and then he will be willing to work more harder I mean extra 2 hours per day he will try to work. Same as I said now if I go to you know to a school and I said that if you perform this positive behavior if every day if I see that you students you enter the class and before entering the class you wash your hands properly with soap and water then I will observe and whoever you know all those who will first will hand wash with soap and water and then enter the class then I will give that particular student plus 5 marks plus 10 marks plus 20 marks depends.

So, incentive is not only about the monetary it is also about the non-monetary. You know non-monetary incentive the encouragement the praise and you know in if I say that you know if you work harder this month then you will get extra to leave for the next 6 months or something you know if you do extra work I mean if you work for extra hours this month that from for the next 6 months you will have 2 extra leaves or 5 extra leaves. So, it is all about and you know in fact, you see in the promotion if I say that if you work for this long duration there will be probability that you will be getting promotion ok. So, it is not about that incentive we have only the I mean reward incentive is only related to monetary it can also be non-monetary. Same you can also apply into the you know the public health that if you get your daughter married at 18 or after 18 then you will get certain amount of money right.

This is also a kind of incentive we are trying to prevent child marriage we are trying to you know prevent teenage pregnancy how by just making a policy making guideline ok. That yeah if you study till you know class 12 or if you get married at the age of 18 or after 18 years you will get some benefits some monetary benefit these are the amounts of money all these things.

So, in many examples you can see you know the behavioral incentives it be it monetary or non-monetary it depends, but incentives work. So, there are evidences you know if you go through different behavioral economics articles and different literatures you will see that the incentives they work. Consequently standard economic theory suggests that reward incentives particularly monetary incentives can motivate individuals to engage in behaviors that they otherwise would avoid it is always done if I go and tell that you will get money for conducting this field work.

So, you know he or she will be very motivated and if I just say see this these are your responsibilities you have to do you know you have to conduct a field survey you have to go tomorrow and you have to conduct a 10 20 surveys. So, you know that person will not feel that motivated, but at the same point if I say that yeah if you do a do survey and if you complete by 1 week or you know per survey you will be getting 100 rupees or 200 rupees or any kind of you know incentive then that particular person will be motivated will get motivated and then he or she will try to do that particular job or that particular behavior. So, these are all about some basic you know some basic understanding about the incentives. You know for you know the policymakers they feel I mean they think and they develop guidelines that yeah if we can give some incentive to the community people then they will perform this particular behavior. So, the importance of behavioral economics in public health is huge you know considering the policy making issues and considering the guidelines.

So, behavioral economics has a very important role. So, conclusion: the essential focus of sociology is on the individual social behavior that is a person's actions and motives addressed to the actions and motives of others in primary and formal relations. As well as in collective entities ranging from small groups to organizations to institutions you know to the social system nations and globally. Now, behavioral economics we have we just now read before few minutes that it is a field which is at the intersection of economics and psychology. These are the learning resources you can go through both the learning resources. Thank you.