A photograph of a group of women in a refugee camp. The women are wearing headscarves and heavy clothing. One woman in the center is holding a young child wrapped in a colorful blanket. The background shows blue and white tents, suggesting a temporary settlement. The overall atmosphere is one of hardship and displacement.

## **Unit 3: Week 3: Social Determinants of Health**

**By: Hana Taha**

# What is “Health”?

- The Constitution of the World Health Organization (1948) conceptualizes health as being more than the absence of disease, illness and physical health. Fundamentally, health is about physical, mental, and social well-being, and it is understood that health and well-being can be adversely affected by social policies.

# What is “Health”?



- Health is a human right and a social justice issue. It is also a public good.
- Governments have a responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures.

# What is health

- The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.
- Governments have a responsibility for the health of their peoples. Health is a priority for the whole of society.

# Meet Khalid

- **“Why is Khalid in the hospital?”**

- **He has an infection in his leg?**
- **How did he get this infection?**

He has a cut on his leg that got infected

- **But why does he have a cut on his leg?**

Because he was playing in the junk yard next to his apartment building and there was some sharp, jagged steel there that he fell on.

- **But why was he playing in a junk yard?**

Because his neighborhood is kind of run down. A lot of kids play there and there is no one to supervise them.

- **But why does he live in that neighborhood?**

Because his parents can't afford a nicer place to live.

- **But why can't his parents afford a nicer place to live?**

Because his Dad is unemployed, and his Mom is sick.

- **But why is his Dad unemployed?**

Because he doesn't have much education and he can't find a job.



**But  
why...?”**

Dalia\*, 15 years old, is a Syrian girl. She arrived to Za'atari camp 6 years ago with her family. She got married in the camp. She can't remember much about her life back in Syria, but she does recall some painful memories of fear and the loss of her toys when their house was destroyed by the war.

**Meet Dalia**  
**She came to the health center to vaccinate her first baby. She had bruise under her eye and scratches on her face!!**

**Dalia's health is the story of the social determinants that surround her**



# Dalia's Health

- Her health talks about her genetics, age, sex and painful memories
- It is a narrative of her access to healthy foods to nourish her body
- It is related to her access to quality education and her parents' access to fair employment
- It is directly related to her access to affordable health care
- Her health is related to her housing situation and the reliability of public transportation.
- It reflects the level of social support that she gets from her family and community members
- Her health is negatively inflicted by bias and oppression that she could face because of her ethnicity, gender, and social class.

# Health inequities

- Health inequities is **the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries.**
- In countries at all levels of income, health and illness follow a social gradient: **the lower the socioeconomic position, the worse the health.**

# Context

- The context of people's lives influence their health.
- Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment.
- Individuals are unlikely to be able to directly control many of the determinants of health.
- Many factors combine to affect the health of individuals and communities.

# Context

- To a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on our health.
- Access and use of health care services often have less of an impact.
- **Social determinants of health contribute as much as 80% to health outcomes.**

# Social determinants of health

- The World Health Organization (WHO) definition of the social determinants of health (SDH) as: “The conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of **forces and systems** shaping the conditions of daily life”.
- **These forces and systems** include economic policies and development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems.
- The distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels shapes the circumstances in which people live.

# Social Determinants of Health

- The social and economic environment
- The physical environment
- The person's individual characteristics and behaviors.
- Access to quality health care

# Social Determinants of Health

- Genetics - inheritance plays a part in determining lifespan, healthiness and the likelihood of developing certain illnesses.
- Sex - Men and women suffer from different types of diseases at different ages.
- Personal behavior and coping skills – balanced eating, keeping active, smoking, drinking, and how we deal with life's stresses and challenges all affect health.

# **Social determinants of health**

- Poverty, income and social status - higher income and social status are linked to better health.
- The greater the gap between the richest and poorest people, the greater the differences in health.
- Social support networks – greater support from families, friends and communities is linked to better health.

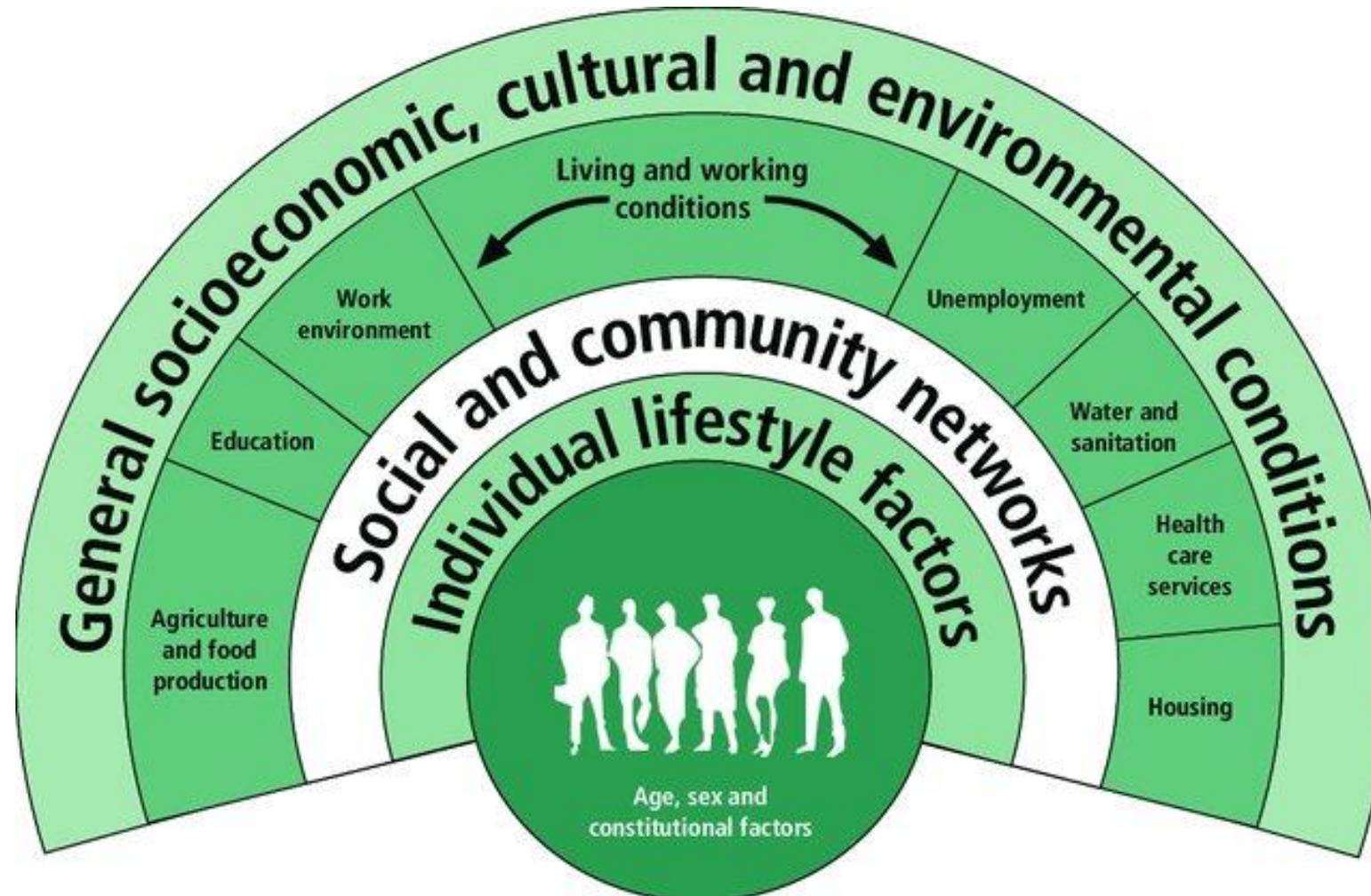
# Social Determinants of Health

- Health services - access and use of services that prevent and treat disease influences health
- Safe water and clean air, healthy workplaces, safe houses, communities and roads all contribute to good health.
- Employment and working conditions – people in employment are healthier, particularly those who have more control over their working conditions

# **Social determinants of health**

- Education – low education levels are linked with poor health, more stress and lower self-confidence.
- Culture, customs and traditions, and the beliefs of the family and community all affect health.
- Social justice and Gender equity

# Determinants of health



# Examples of the social determinants of health

- Gender inequity
- Education
- Food insecurity
- Poverty, income and social protection
- Unemployment and job insecurity
- Working life conditions
- Housing, basic amenities and the environment
- Early childhood poor nutrition
- Human and civil rights

# Examples of the social determinants of health

- Social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Social support
- Political stability, wars and conflicts
- Climate change and natural disasters
- Population growth and economic development in the country
- Urbanization
- Access to affordable health services of decent quality.

# Examples of the effects of the social determinants of health

- Malnutrition –
  - more susceptible to disease and less likely to recover
- Cooking with wood and coal –
  - lung diseases
- Poor sanitation –
  - more intestinal infections

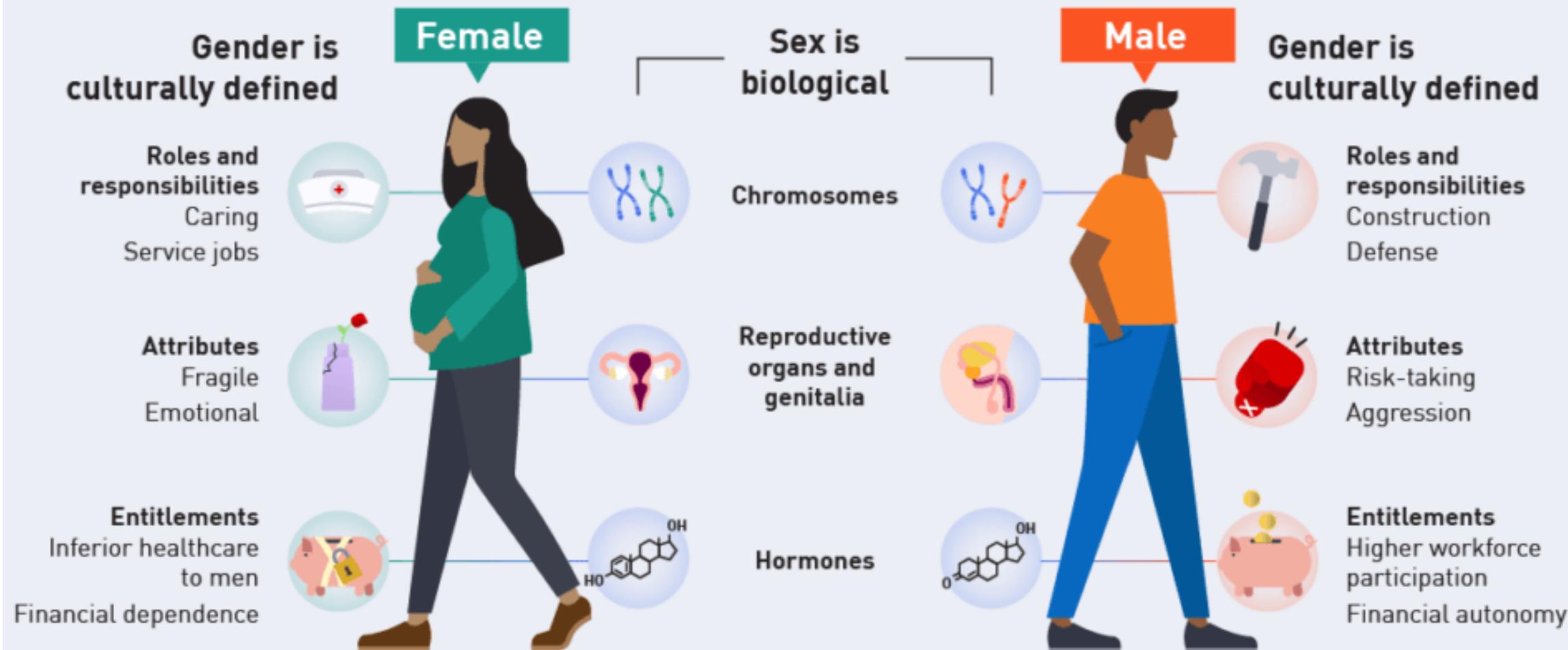
# Examples of the effects of the social determinants of health

- Poverty
  - commercial sex work and STIs, HIV/AIDS
- Advertising tobacco and alcohol –
  - addiction and related diseases
- Untrained drivers or unsafe roads-
  - road traffic accidents

# Gender

- **Gender** refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men.
- While most people are born either male or female (biological sex), they are taught appropriate behaviors for males and females (gender norms) regarding how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex (gender relations) and which functions or responsibilities they should assume in society (gender roles).

# Sex vs Gender



THE LANCET

Source: Lancet Series on Gender Equality, Norms and Health. Paper 1, 2019

# Sex versus Gender

- **Sex** : characteristics that are biologically defined (biological maleness or femaleness)
- **Gender**:
  - Socially constructed
  - Can vary from society to society, and from time to time
  - Concerned with socially acceptable norms and behaviours
  - Key social stratifier, affecting health system needs, experiences and outcomes at all levels.

# “Sex” vs. “Gender”

- There is no problem per se in socially constructed differences between women and men, except when these differences limit opportunities or resources needed to attain health and thereby result in discrimination that may have negative consequences on health.

# Gender

**Gender norms, roles and relations result in differences between men and women in:**

- exposure to risk factors or vulnerability;
- household-level investment in nutrition, care and education;
- access to and use of health services;
- experiences in health-care settings; and
- social impacts of ill-health.

# Gender

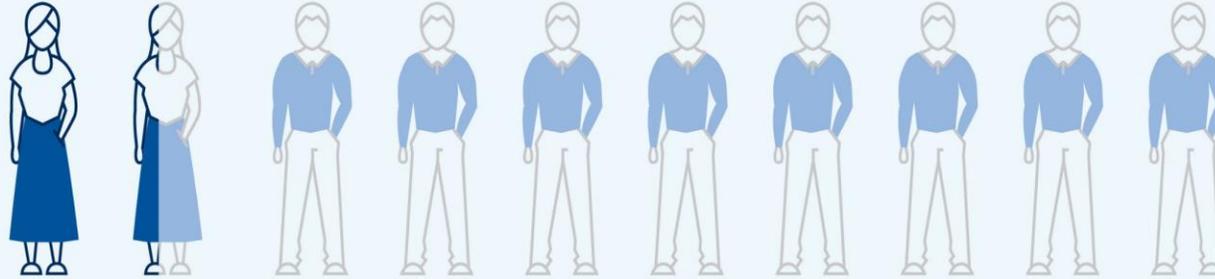
**Gender norms influence access and control over resources needed to attain optimal health, including:**

- Economic security (income);
- social (social networks);
- political (leadership, participation);
- information and education (health literacy, academic);
- access to health (access to health services); and
- internal (self confidence/esteem).

# Workplace gap

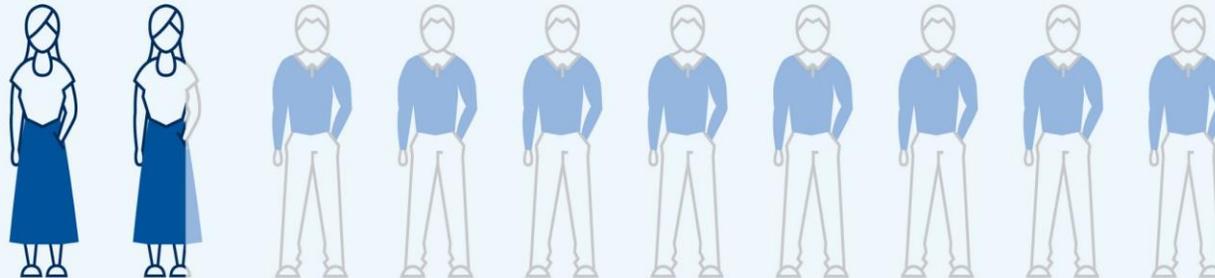
# Thank you

Percent of firms with majority female ownership\*



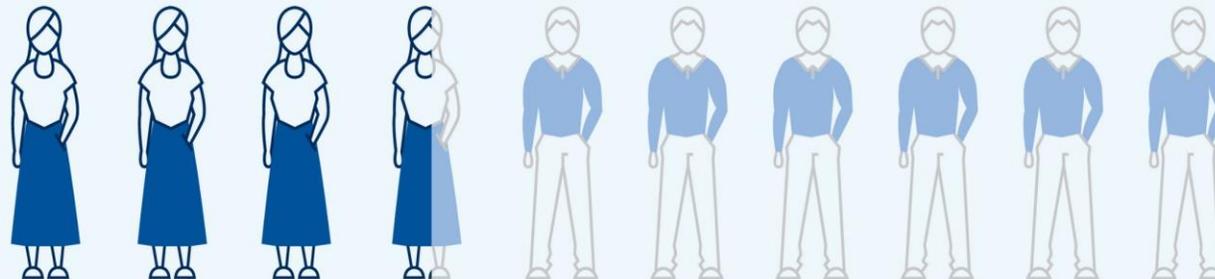
14%

Percent of firms with a female top manager\*



18%

Percentage of females in senior roles\*\*



36%

\*Based on the sample of countries where the Enterprise survey is conducted \*\*Senior roles, are those who plan, direct, coordinate and evaluate the overall activities of enterprises, governments and other organizations, or of organizational units within them, and formulate and review their policies, laws, rules and regulations. Corresponds to ILO Major Group 1, (ISCO-08)