Editorial

Keeping our eye on the future

This year has seen the publication of ‘Fair Society, Healthy Lives—the Marmot Review Final Report’. This seminal report, which followed the publication of the global Commission on Social Determinants of Health, is a response to the recommendation from that report that national governments develop and implement strategies suited to their particular context. That said, this detailed report provides much material and thought for those outside the UK, and in particular for the need to recognize that health inequalities act across the full continuum of social disadvantage, and thus action needs to reflect this. Popay et al. set out a response to this report in a related editorial.

Our perspectives series focuses on climate change and population growth—a critical issue linked to current global inequalities. We focus on the particular—and arguably neglected and controversial issue—of population growth, although as the associated commentaries make clear, urgent and concerted efforts are made across a wide range of areas to both reduce carbon emissions and to mitigate its effects, which will have a differential impact on resource poor areas and people.

The issue of health inequalities—and the factors that may mediate this—whether a lack of social support, or access to healthcare, as in the higher in-hospital mortality rates in uninsured compared with insured children in the USA, or to specialist services, is highlighted in this edition.

In our occasional series of articles on Public Health Education and Training, we highlight an innovative partnership between the UK and Swaziland, set up to promote the translation of public health research into practice, where sustainable changes to programmes across a range of areas such as tuberculosis, epilepsy and anti-retroviral treatment have been implemented. Could this be a model from which other partnerships could learn?

Finally, recognizing that, not only are we interested in global public health issues and inequalities, we also need to train the public health specialists of the future, we have an article exploring how feasibility and practical it is for UK public health trainees to meet the current requirements for communicable disease control training. Training continues to be the lifeblood of our specialty for the future, and we need to strive to continue to review, improve and invest in that future.

Selena Gray, Gabriel M. Leung

References

2 Popay J, Whitehead M, Hunter DJ. Injustice is killing people on a large scale—but what is to be done about it? J Public Health 2010;32(2):148–149.