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Citations

Sprenger, M.: „A societal and social event“, in „Monitor Versorgungsforschung“ (05/23), p. 34.
http://doi.org/10.24945/MVF.05.23.1866-0533.2542

# A societal and social event

>> While the central question of medicine is: What makes people sick? the central question of public health is: What keeps people healthy? Both perspectives on health and disease are essential for successful pandemic management. Both the pathogenetic, disease- and risk-oriented perspective of medicine and the salutogenetic, health- and resource-oriented public health perspective.

The multidiscipline of public health interlinks all sciences that deal with health and disease. The German translation is therefore also health sciences and includes medical, nursing, sports and nutrition sciences, psychology, education, but also systems, social and communication sciences, epidemiology and biostatistics, management, health economics, ethics and some more.

Public health activities aim to minimise health and social inequalities and to enable as many people as possible to live as long as possible in good health and with a high quality of life. The determinants of health, i.e. those factors that influence our health positively or negatively, are decisive for this. In addition to our genome, age and gender, these include health behaviour, our living and working environments, social networks, but also education, the labour market, the environment, housing, the rule of law, the social and health care system and much more.

From a public health perspective, a pandemic is a societal and social event that affects all members of a society. It captures not only the direct effects of the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, the number of covid-19 sufferers, hospital loads and deaths, but also the myriad desirable and undesirable health, psychosocial and economic effects of all measures. While a purely medical-virological view only stares at one virus and one disease, a public health perspective always has the big picture in mind, all determinants of health, existing inequalities, but also the care of other diseases. One of the many unanswered questions is why this perspective on society as a whole has not been able to gain acceptance in Germany and Austria.

On the treatment level, an intervention without certain knowledge and without prior information about the effect and possible side effects would not only be unscientific and unethical, but in certain cases also punishable by law. The same applies to interventions at the societal level. As in medicine, the principle of proportionality also applies in politics: „Measures should only be taken if the desired effects are sufficiently certain to occur and clearly outweigh possible undesired effects.“ 1Instead ofthe principles of evidence-based medicine, those of evidence-based health policy („Evidence-Based Public Health“) apply: „For this purpose, the available knowledge of the medical, economic, ethical, socio-cultural and legal aspects of diseases and interventions, is evaluated systematically, transparently and in a targeted manner and incorporated into the decision-making processes. All steps - from problem definition to the implementation of measures and programmes - should be explicit, transparent and justified.“ 2

Both principles were criminally neglected. Health policy decisions in the last three years have far too often been non-transparent, poorly justified, unscientific, unethical and disproportionate. These policies, perceived as arbitrary, have cost a lot of trust, significantly weakened the effectiveness of pandemic management and social cohesion, and increased collateral damage.

A good database is the basic prerequisite for accurate risk assessment, proper risk communication and any successful risk management. It is comparable to a cockpit in which all necessary instruments are not only present but also provide correct data. If instruments do not function or show incorrect values, a flight on sight may still be possible in fair weather, but at night or in fog, wrong decisions are quickly made with corresponding undesirable consequences. Germany and Austria, two of the richest countries in the world, never had a fully equipped cockpit with precise instruments at any time during the pandemic, and were far too often flying blind.

Without a good database, risk management cannot be successful. But neither can it be successful without appropriate strategies and measures. The combination of unsuitable strategies and measures, based on a miserable database, has the most serious consequences. Better data, attention to proportionality and assessment of the desired and undesired effects of all measures, adherence to ethical principles, respect for fundamental rights and much more would have been possible. The thesis papers prepared by German health scientists have provided good suggestions in this regard since the spring of 2020, 3buthave been ignored by the dominant medical-virological tunnel vision.

Fighting a single health risk „no matter what the cost „ and neglecting all other determinants of health is a social aberration that must never be repeated. Therefore, there is no way around a comprehensive interdisciplinary reappraisal of the pandemic - https://pandemieaufarbeitung.net/ -; however, this is not only a political and scientific task, but above all a task for society as a whole, in which the citizens must also participate. Appreciatively and on an equal footing. This process will take years, needs sufficient resources and must be well moderated. Bygones are definitely not bygones! <<

Literature:

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