

Wednesday, April 26th at 4:00PM
Blow Hall - Board of Visitors Room

Human Development and Health Transitions

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Health transitions are changes in patterns of disease and mortality rates that occur in populations over time. As countries develop, the relative burden of pandemic disease tends to decrease. This can be analyzed both between countries of various development levels and within a country that is developing. For example, as a nation becomes better able to treat infectious diseases, average life expectancies rise. This consequently causes an increase in the number of individuals who die from non-communicable, chronic illnesses like heart disease or hypertension. Health transitions between countries includes trends of lower incidence rates of age-related chronic diseases in developing countries due to lower life expectancies, but higher mortality rates of the fewer cases that do occur. This can be seen in advanced, first-world countries that have higher cancer incidence rates, but are able to cure cases with adequate health care accessibility, progressive medical assets, and extensive knowledge bases. On the contrary, undeveloped countries have a scarcity of resources, frequent treatment abandonment, and insufficient education programs that lead to their increased cancer mortality rates. The relationship between health transitions and development can be explained by health care inequality, imbalance of resource distribution, and various socioeconomic and environmental factors. As malaria's pervasiveness throughout Sub-Saharan Africa increases as a result of climate change, the disease will spread into previously unaffected areas. Additionally, general health inequalities caused by social hierarchies and determinants can affect child mortality. Most often, elevated child mortality rates occur in nations that have lower development levels and poor socioeconomic statuses. This can be partially attributed to unequal resource distribution. Understanding the correlation between varying development levels and health transitions or disease risk is extremely important in alleviating the disease and mortality burden in developing countries. Identifying potential solutions to disease outbreaks and child mortality rates can be done through statistical regression models and other various modelling techniques. Although there are still flaws in development and health research, attempting to understand ways in which these worldwide problems can be resolved or relieved is crucial in assisting future global development.