Health Inequalities and the social determinants of health

Name

Institution

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The United Kingdom is one of the most developed places in the world and one would expect that elements of inequalities in the distribution of health services not to be there. The truth of the matter is that there are very big disparities among citizens of the UK when it comes to health outcomes. Those people who are living on the lower side of the social ladder are having it difficult accessing quality medical care that would guarantee them better health outcomes compared to the rich people. It means that the rich people are able to access better health outcome since they have the financial muscle that is likely to play a significant role in the choices that they make as far as medical care is concerned. What also needs to be seen is that the life expectancy between the affluent and the poor is very wide. On average, the rich are likely to outlive the poor by at least seven years. Some of the factors that create these disparities in accessing health care are political in nature, while others are social in nature. The political factors lead to unfair distribution of resources among the places where people live. When preference of resource distribution is given to richer regions, it means that the poor regions have to suffer the consequences of the political decisions that have been made by their leaders.

 The governments of Scotland, Northern Ireland and England have come up with a host of programs that are meant to ensure that there is equal distribution and access to health services by all people. However, most of these programs have not yielded anything and the gap that they were meant to seal is still there. An example can be given of England where since 1997, a host of policies have been put in place to end this unequal distribution of health care facilities but there appears that nothing is working out correctly. Scotland has indentified key priority areas that are meant to address the issue of social inequality in the provision of healthcare. Some of these priority areas include taking care of the early years of newly born, combating mental illnesses, addressing drug and substance abuse especially among the youth and combating the big killer diseases in the country. All these are not working. In Northern Ireland, its main target is working towards ensuring that life expectancy between the rich and the poor is reduced. That is why the government has invested heavily in the health sector with the sole aim of ensuring that all people enjoy the health benefits in the expected manner.

 What should be seen is that all the efforts that are being fronted by the many governments in the UK may not give the desired outcomes as far as the inequalities in the promotion of health is concerned. What needs to be done is that they should all aim to ensure that the citizens are well financially so that they can take care of themselves. When the governments create an atmosphere where all people are likely to participate in economic activities that will be of benefit to them, then they are likely to have the financial muscle that will make them seek better medical care and avoid situations that predispose them to diseases. Some of these conditions that predispose them to diseases include poor housing, which they can obtain if their economic power is strengthened.