

Commission on Social Determinants of Health

*Tackling the "Causes of the Causes"
of Disease and Health Inequities*

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CSDH Secretariat
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What good does it do to treat people's illnesses ...



then send them back to the conditions
that made them sick?

World Health Organization



Social Determinants

- The social conditions in which people live and work, reflecting their different positions in hierarchies of power, prestige and resources.
- Or more simply: "The social characteristics in which living takes place" (Tarlov 1996).
- "The social determinants of health refer to both specific features of and pathways by which societal conditions affect health and that potentially can be altered by informed action".

[1] Krieger N. A glossary for social epidemiology J. Epidemiology Community Health 2001; 55:693-700



Much is already known about social determinants...

- Early history of modern public health
- Alma-Ata & Health For All
- Evidence on associations and causal pathways

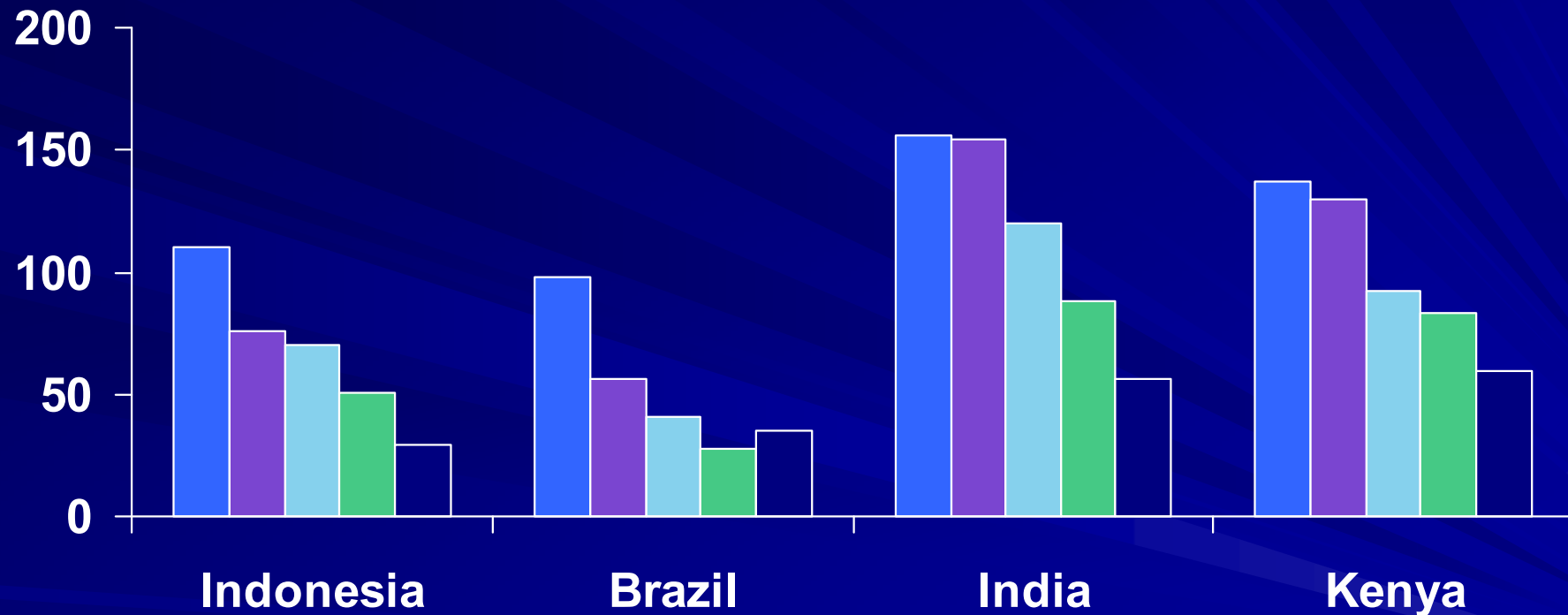


Challenge is turning knowledge of associations into entry points for action !



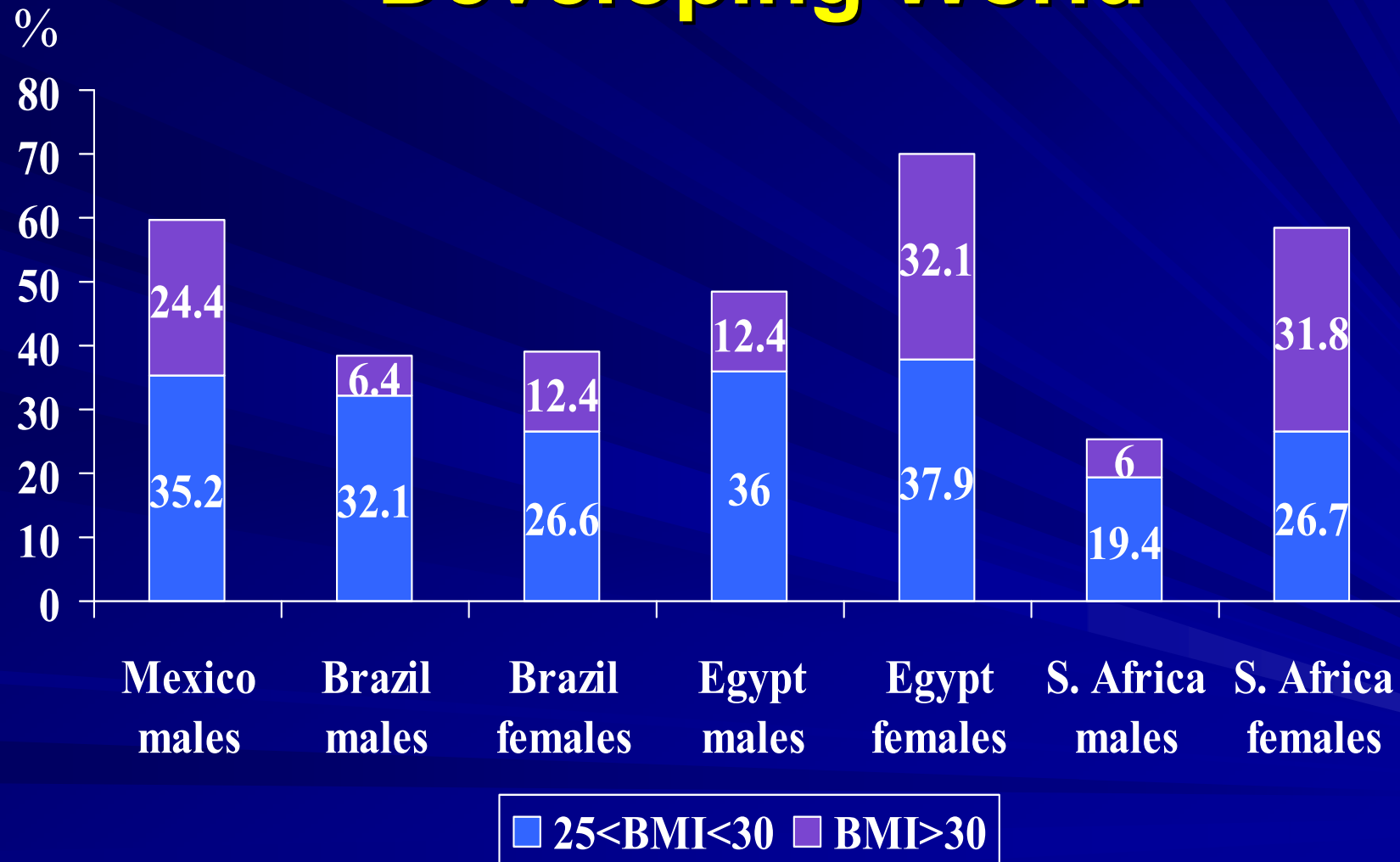
Under 5 Mortality Rates By Socioeconomic Quintile Of Household

Under 5 mortality
per 1000



■ Poorest fifth ■ 2nd poorest fifth ■ Middle fifth
■ 2nd richest fifth ■ Richest fifth

Obesity Patterns Across The Developing World



(Popkin, Development Policy Review, 2003)

SWEDISH PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

Participation
in
society

Economic
and social
security

Conditions in
childhood
and
adolescence

Healthier
working
life

Environments
and
products

Health
promoting
medical
care

Alcohol
drugs
tobacco

Eating
Safe food

Physical
activity

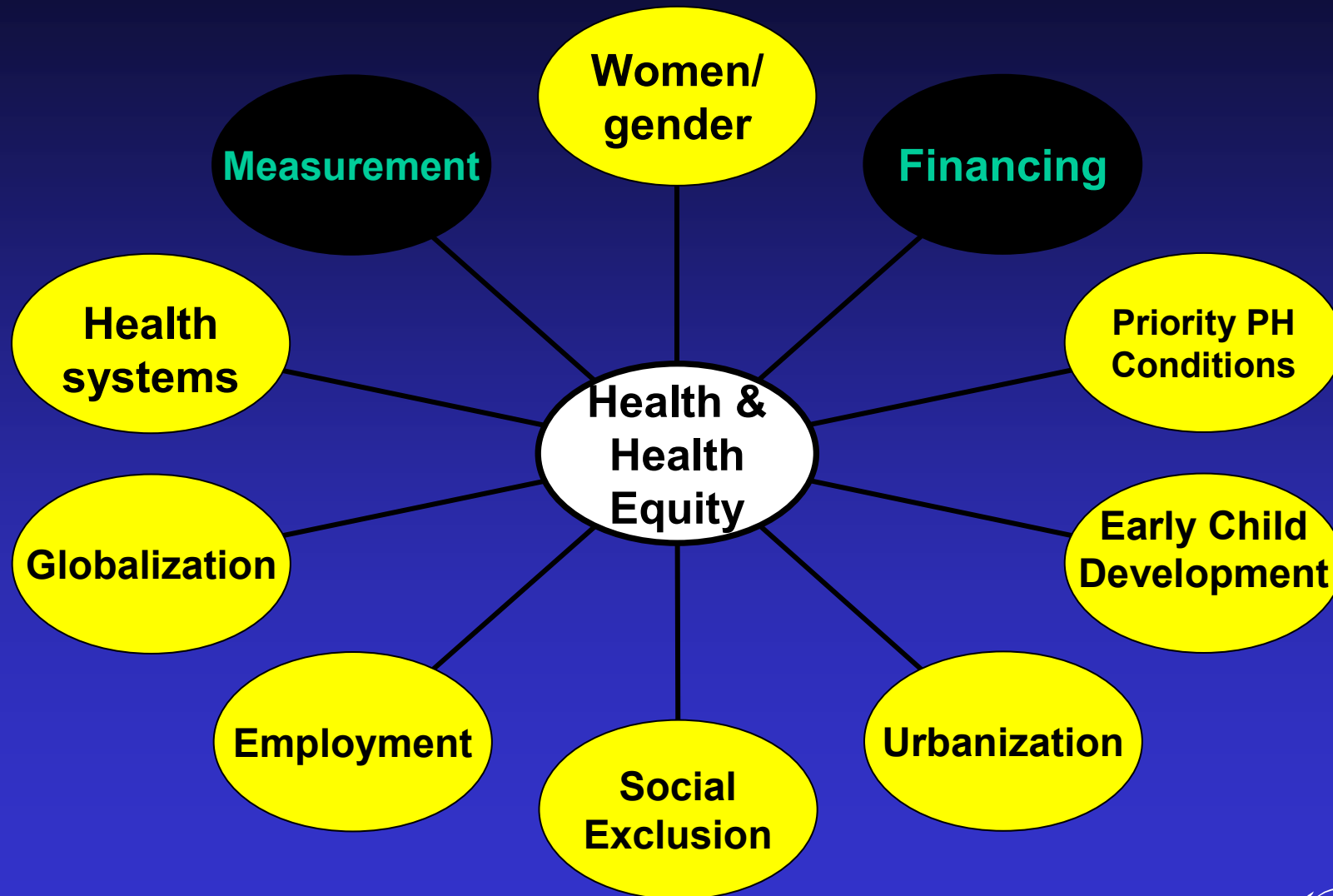
Sexual
health

Prevention
communicable
disease

CSDH Structure



CSDH Knowledge Network Themes



History: trends and opportunities

Social dimensions of health affirmed in WHO Constitution (1948), downplayed during 1950s era of disease campaigns.

Determinants re-emerge under Health for All agenda (1970s), action falters in 1980s.

1990s: paradigm of health as private issue dominant; some exceptions.

2000s: "step-up" and new chance for action.

2005
Commission on social Determinants of Health

2002
CIPIH

Scaling-up

2005

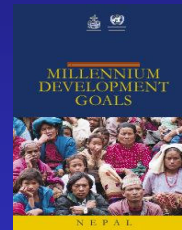
2003



2001



2000



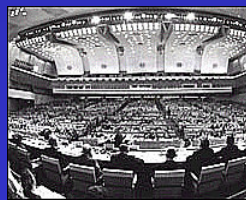
1993



1982



1978



1948



C-PHC

S-PHC

Reforms & Minimum Packages

MDG

World Health Organization



The bottom line

- Social factors powerfully determine health opportunities
- 'Public health innovation' must be broadly construed
- From new medicines and technologies to new health/social policy models
- Implications for public health spending and research



Thank you

For further information:

www.who.int/social_determinants/en/

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