
A publication from the Danish National Healthy Cities Network:**“Equality in health – A collection of articles about equality in health and it’s meaning in the Danish society”**

The Danish Healthy Cities Network published in February 2011 “Equality in health – A collection of articles about equality in health and it’s meaning in the Danish society”. Throughout 2010 and 2011 a sub-network focused on how equality in health was handled in Danish Regions and municipalities/cities and how it was seen from a researcher perspective. This work resulted in the publication, and here follows a summary of the publication which purpose was to provide inspiration for especially “hands on” workers, but also local government and researchers could be inspired. Equality in health is in the publication illuminated in seven different ways in eight articles – both research and case articles from regional and municipality/city practice are described in the publication.

The 1st article by Finn Diderichsen, professor at University of Copenhagen Department of Public Health, describes a historical development of inequality of health from the 1800s to today. The article “The phenomenon inequality in health – neither new nor Danish” is based on Danish and international literature on inequality in health. Professor Signild Vallgård, also from University of Copenhagen Department of Public Health portrays in the 2nd article “Social inequality in health as a political problem”. She explains two different ways to understand inequality; on one hand inequality can be seen as a dichotomy where the individual behavior affects its own health or on the other hand as a gradient where the societies (and local and national politics) have a greater responsibility for the population’s health.

Niels Sandø and Maria Aabel Koch from the National Board of Health in Denmark focus on “Health in all plans” to be necessary to increase equality in health. This 3rd article describes how every sector needs to take responsibility to achieve that goal, and on the same time, that health needs to be seen as the way to achieve goals in other sectors. “How one should live” is the name of article number four written by Morten Hulvej Rod from the National Institute of Public Health. The article gives a framework of the ethic reflections on equality in public health. Young people’s alcohol debut, and how that is discussed at school arranged parental-meetings, provides the framework where techniques, values and audience are discussed.

How to ensure non-smoking environment at selected places where socially vulnerable people get together is described in the project “Røgfrihed for alle” (everyone is entitled to non-smoking environments). The 5th and 6th articles by Helle Stuart and Karen Pedersen, Municipality of Copenhagen and engaged in the Røgfrihed for alle-project, gives first a description of the project in the article “Non-smoking environment – also for socially vulnerable”. The next article explains how a Danish center for addiction in Thy handles smoking cessation courses for the users in “Different ways to smoking cessation in Thisted municipality”.

“Obesity and inequality” is the title on the 7th article written by Kathrine Jensen from Region Nordjylland. The Danish National profile for health “Hvordan har du det?” from 2010 provides the data that, in this study, is analyzed to tell how obesity and inequality are connected. The last article tells the story on how “Gladsaxe municipality moving” engage 60 ethnic minority woman in the local neighborhood to take responsibility for their and others health through education, communication and physical activity. Project Manager Susanne Friis describes in the article that the aim of the project is to reduce social inequality in health.

Our hope is that the publication can raise a discussion not only in Denmark, but also in the Healthy Cities Network in Europe. Likewise we hope that the publication can inspire others in their work on getting equality in health on the everyday agenda.

Best regards *Christina Krog*

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