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Q6(b)

What is meant by health? Is the burden of life style diseases on the rise? Justify your answer with suitable examples

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Anthropology GS 1 · 15 marks · Epidemiological Anthropology

9.8 Epidemiological Anthropology: Health and disease. Infectious and non-infectious diseases, Nutritional deficiency related diseases.

Core demand of the question

- What is meant by health? Is the burden of life style diseases on the rise? Justify your answer with suitable examples
- Write about 200 words for 15 marks

Revision summary

WHO health includes mental and social well-being, not only no germs.

Kleinman split disease from lived illness.

Diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease are rising with urban diets and sitting work.

Tribal and Pacific transitions show how fast metabolism follows food change.

Structure, not only willpower, explains the burden.

Introduction

Health is more than the absence of a named infection. WHO called it complete physical, mental, and social well-being. Anthropology adds that well-being is locally defined and unequally distributed.

Body

Meanings of health

- **Rivers** and later medical anthropologists treated sickness as both biology and meaning.
- **Kleinman** split disease, illness, and sickness.
- A pastoralist may call health the ability to walk with the herd. A factory index may call it blood pressure.

Lifestyle disease burden

- Urban diets, sitting work, tobacco, and alcohol raise **type 2 diabetes, hypertension, IHD**, and some cancers. **ICMR** and WHO India profiles show this rise beside unfinished infection.
- **Thrifty** hypotheses after **Neel** are debated, but the empirical rise in Indian metros and now in small towns is clear.
- Indigenous groups after ration rice and reduced walk, as in some Pacific and Indian tribal transitions, show rapid metabolic change.
- **The burden is not only personal choice.** Farmer **would call it structural:** oil, sugar, stress, and weak public sport.

Flow diagram

Health -> Body
Health -> Meaning
Health -> Social access
Lifestyle NCDs -> Diabetes IHD

Conclusion

Health is functioning in a social world, not a lab slip alone. Lifestyle diseases are rising in India because environments of food and work have changed faster than bodies and public systems.

Facts & figures

WHO 1948

Health as complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely absence of disease.

Kleinman

Disease is the biological lesion; illness is the experience; sickness is the social role.

ICMR

Indian surveys show a growing NCD share of death and disability beside infection.

Neel

Thrifty-genotype idea is contested; the observed urban rise in diabetes is not.