

PHAC Health Impact Assessment Project

Presentation to Symposium

30 March 2004

Outline

- What is the Public Health Advisory Committee?
- Overview of project
- Where to next?

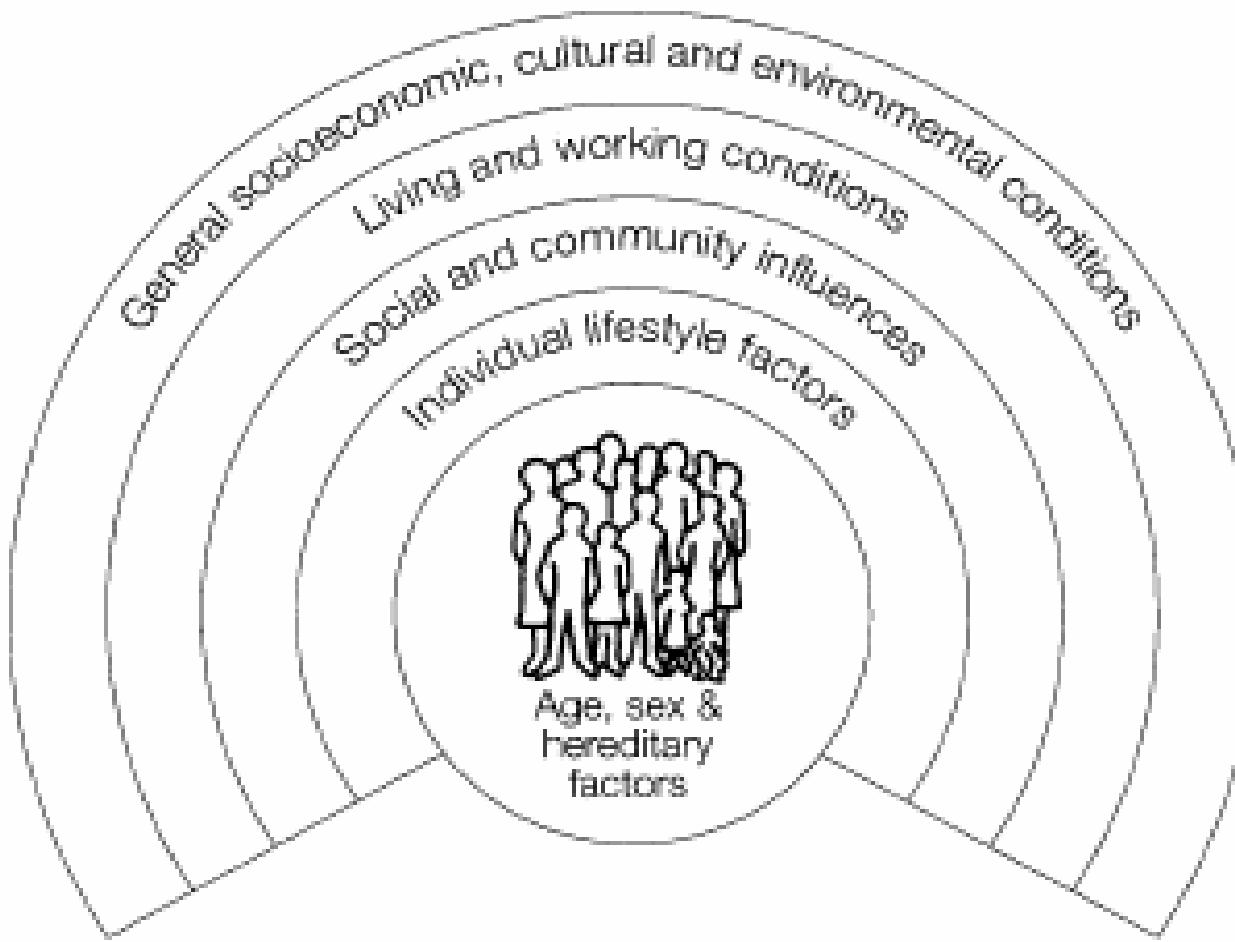
Public Health Advisory Committee Te Röpü Tohutohu i te Hauora Tūmatanui

- Established under legislation
- Sub-group of the NHC
- Required to give independent advice to the Minister on “public health issues, including factors underlying the health of people & communities”

What is public health?

- “The science & art of preventing disease, prolonging life & promoting health through the organised efforts of society”
- Concerned with health outcomes, patterns of determinants, & policies

Determinants of health



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991)

Background to the HIA project

- 1998 NHC report on social, cultural & economic determinants of health
- New Zealand Health Strategy objective
- Interest in transport & health

Project components

- Guide to HIA
- Case study on transport & health – including background papers
- Conclusions on HIA & its future use



HIA case study using public transport policy

- Selecting the policy – review of public transport funding
- Approach to cross-sectoral work – informal collaboration
- Case study included 3 trials

Outcomes of trialling

- Refinements to the Guide to HIA
- Submission to Transfund
- Key lessons – communication, understanding of policy outcomes & public health concepts

Where to next?

- Wide distribution of Guide to HIA
- Question of how to facilitate use of HIA across government

Facilitating use of HIA

- Application of HIA should happen incrementally
- HIA should be built into the routines of govt policy-making
- Need to increase capacity & expertise across government

Challenges

- Funding & capacity-building – whose responsibility?
- Need for evaluation of HIA
- Crossover with other impact assessments
- Avoiding ‘health fascist’ criticisms

Opportunities

- Political climate is conducive
 - ✓ Sustainable development
 - ✓ Social reporting
 - ✓ 'Whole of government' thinking
 - ✓ Local government's broader mandate
 - ✓ NZHS & proposed Public Health Bill

Summary

- Public Health Advisory Committee & public health
- The PHAC's project
- Challenges in applying HIA across sectors, but also opportunities