

Social Sustainability

Mutual Understanding of Health and Disease Increases the Value of Health Care Systems.

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Why is it that in the 21st Century No One Can Say what Health Truly is?

Purpose of the Poster

- To show that health care is deficient, because the term “health” is not defined.
- To propose the Meikirch Model as a realistic definition of health.
- To explain why the Meikirch Model needs to be implemented urgently.

Why Health Care Systems Need to Know what Health is

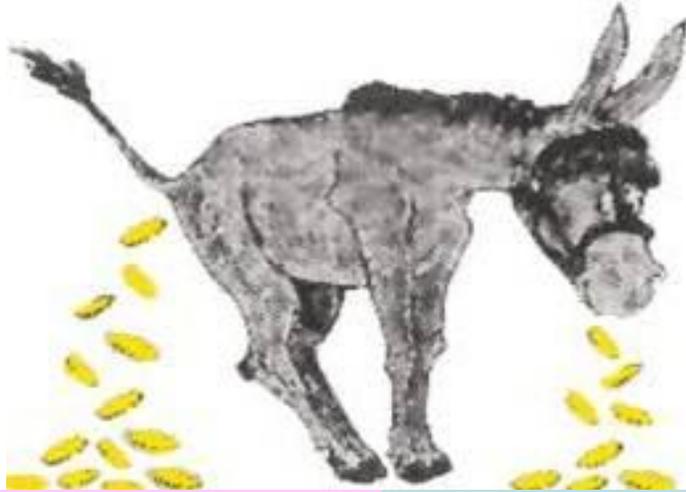
1. Health of human beings is the single most important objective of health care systems.
2. The different factors that determine health require appropriate allocation of resources.
3. Citizens have to know what they can contribute to their health themselves.

In present health care systems these postulates are deficient!

Competing Incentives Render Health Care Systems Deficient

"Players"	Competing Incentives
Citizen	Overeating, insufficient sport, smoking, alcohol, unsafe sex, etc.
Patients	Overuse/abuse of health services
Physicians	Income, professional prestige
Health workers	Income, professional prestige
Administrators	Prestige and financial status
Insurance Comp.	Shareholder value
Industry	Shareholder value
Politicians	Reelection

Resource Allocations



Currently allocations are based on scientific evidence and balances of power of the 20th century.

Future allocations should respond to new evidence and to consideration of the nature of health.



High-level UN Meeting on Non-communicable Diseases (NCD) Sept. 19 and 20, 2011

- It is a unique world-wide effort to reduce disability, morbidity and mortality due to NCD.
- Important interventions are tobacco control, salt reduction, improved diets and physical activities, and reduction in hazardous alcohol intake.
- These measures must primarily be addressed to the people and not to health care workers. Not knowing what health is how will they respond?

Summary of the Problems

1. At all levels there are incentives competing with health care. Health care systems therefore invite “self-service”.
2. Appropriation of resources is inefficient because it does not reflect the nature of health.
3. Obesity, respiratory diseases, etc. testify that citizens lack adequate information and motivation to care for their own health.



The enigma of health is used and abused.



What is the Nature of Health e.g. from a Medical Point of View ?

So far the **Meikirch Model** is the only definition of health that uses criteria, which can be assessed in medical consultations. Therefore the Meikirch Model is realistic and suitable for health care.

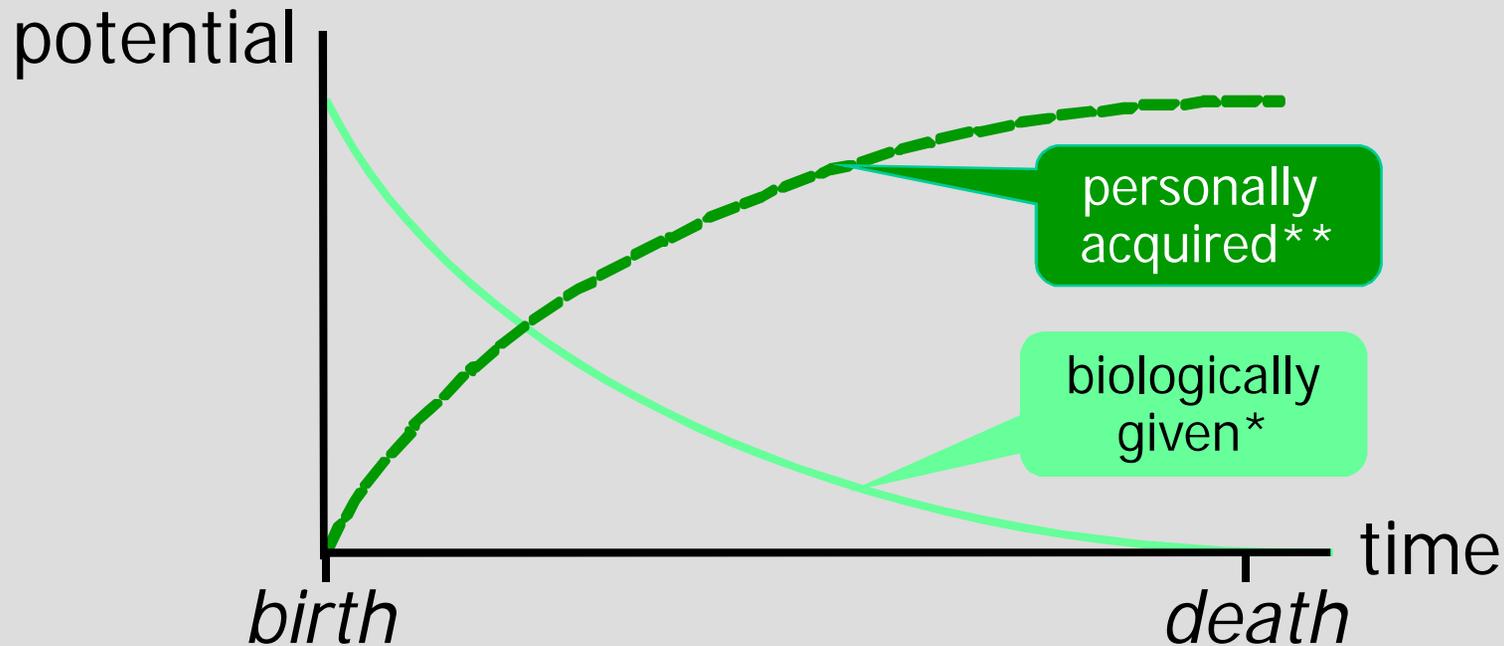
The Meikirch Model^{1,2}

- “Health is a dynamic state of wellbeing characterized by a physical, mental and social potential, which satisfies the demands of a life commensurate with age, culture, and personal responsibility.”
- “If the potential is insufficient to satisfy these demands the state is disease.”

1. Bircher J. Towards a dynamic definition of health and disease. *Med Health Care Philos.* 2005; 8: 335-341

2. Bircher J., Wehkamp K.H. Health care needs to be focused on health. *Health* 2011; 3: 378-382. Open access: www.scirp.org/journal/HEALTH

The Two Potentials



* At the time of birth the biologically given potential results from the genetic equipment and the quality of the pregnancy.

** The personally acquired potential results from all physical, mental and social resources a person acquires during his or her life

Resource Allocation for the Two Potentials

Today's allocation of resources favors the biologically given potential, whereas the personally acquired potential is neglected.



Experience by physicians and positive psychology¹, reveal that the personally acquired potential is capable of reducing morbidity and mortality. It deserves reevaluation, more attention, and more resources.

1) Seligman M.E. Flourish. A visionary understanding of happiness and well-being. Free Press, New York, 2011: 182 – 220.

The Personally Acquired Potential is the Blind Spot of Health Care

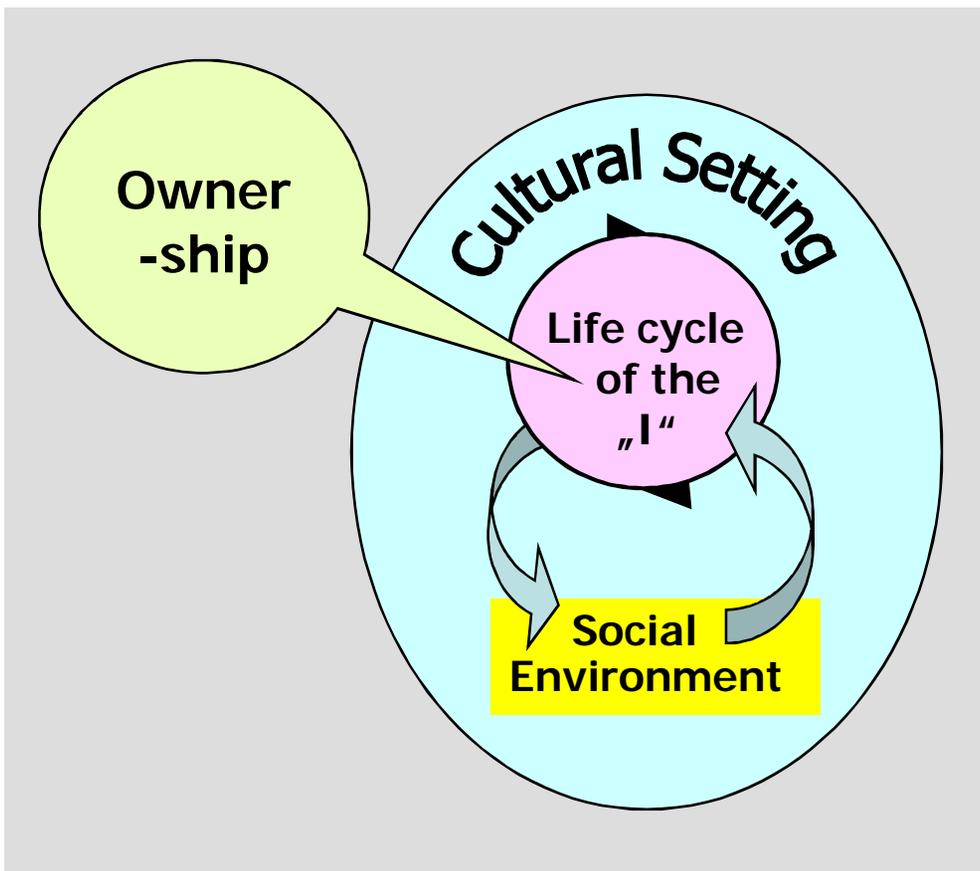


This family is misrepresented, because the blind spot or “scotoma” covers one child.

A high personally acquired potential is pivotal for well-being. It also improves physical health. If cultivated sufficiently, it reduces mortality¹ due to infectious illnesses, cardio-vascular diseases, cancer, and others.

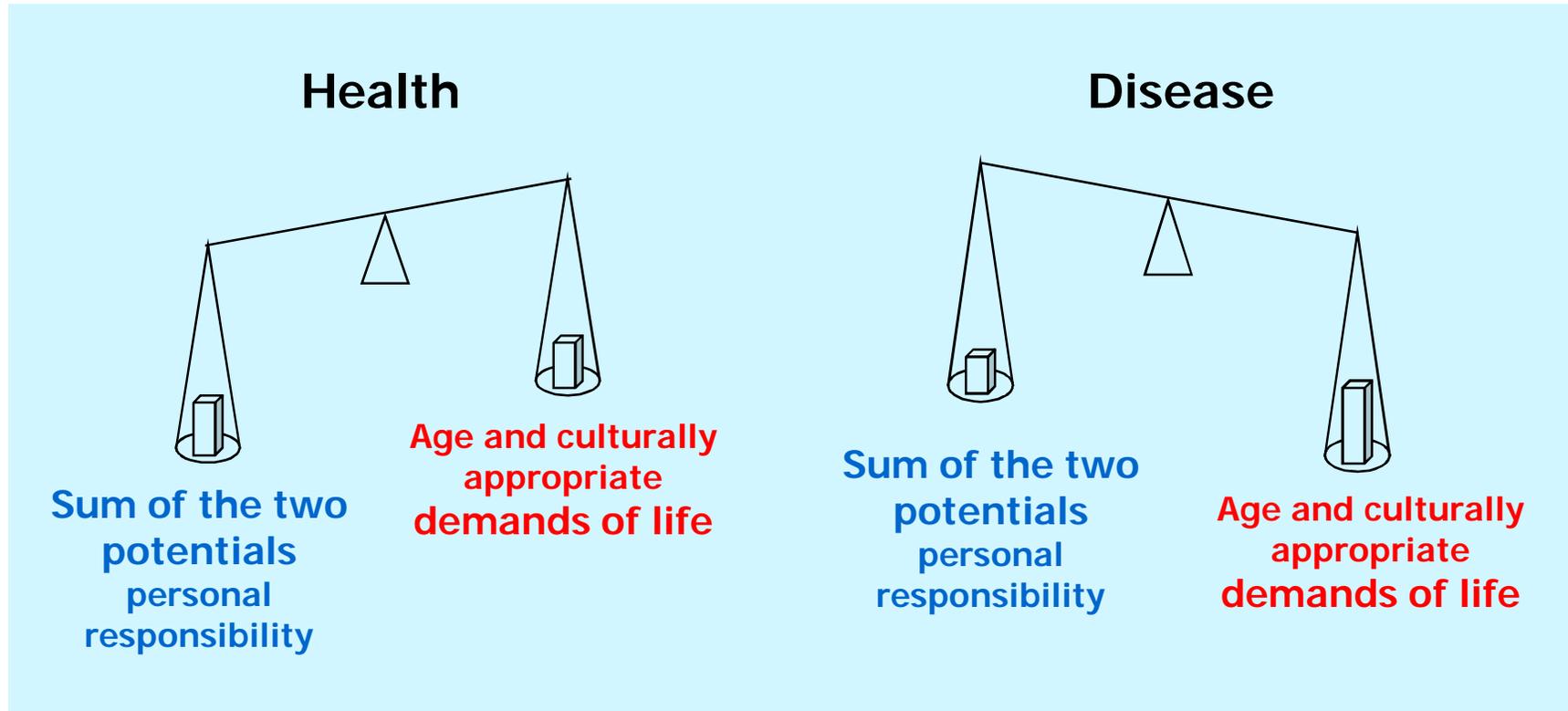
1) Seligman M.E. Florish, a visionary understanding of happiness and well-being. Free Press, New York, 2011: 182 – 220.

Demands of Life, Age, Culture and Self-Responsibility



1. Children and elderly persons are dependant on the social environment.
2. Productive persons have to contribute to the social environment.
3. Everything occurs within a cultural environment.
4. Ownership implies self-responsibility for health.

Identification of Health and Disease



In most cases identification of health and disease is clear. Between the two, however, there is a gray zone as exists between day and night. This is pertinent for legal purposes.

The Six Elements of the Meikirch-Model Can Be Assessed in Practice

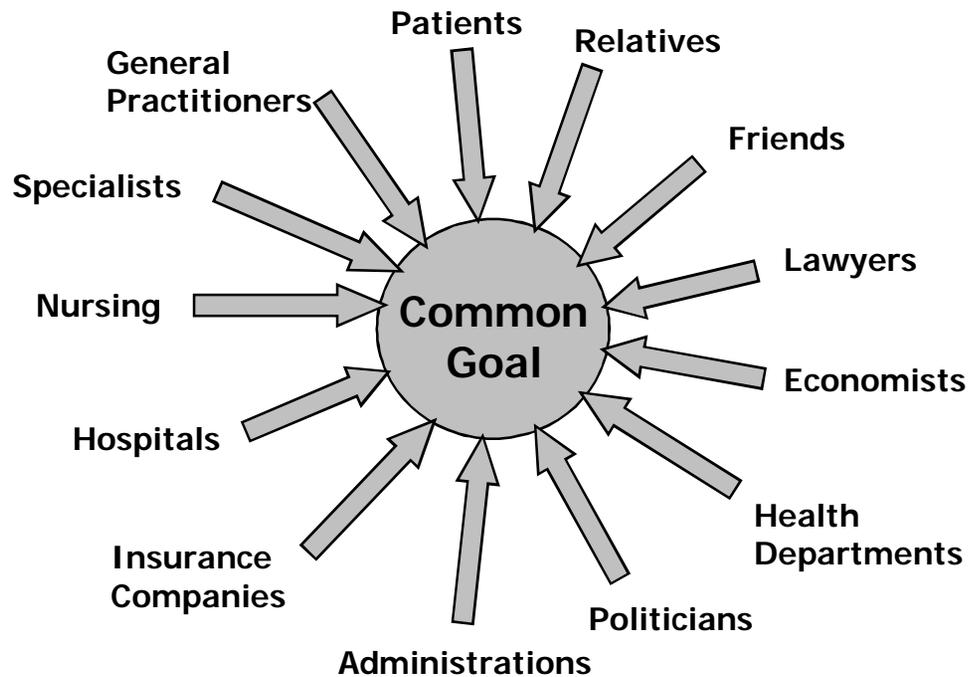
Therefore the Meikirch Model is a “realistic concept of health”.

1. Biologically given potential
2. Personally acquired potential*
3. Demands of life
4. Age
5. Culture
6. Self-responsibility

Health care must take all these factors into account and not only the biologically given potential.

*Here is the interface between individual and social health.

In the Fight against the Competing Incentives the Meikirch Model is the Common Goal.



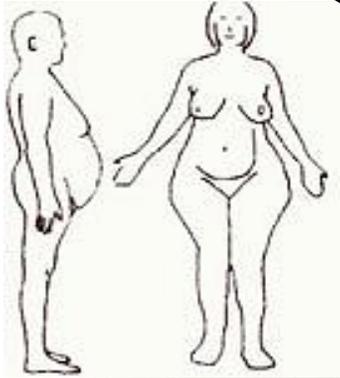
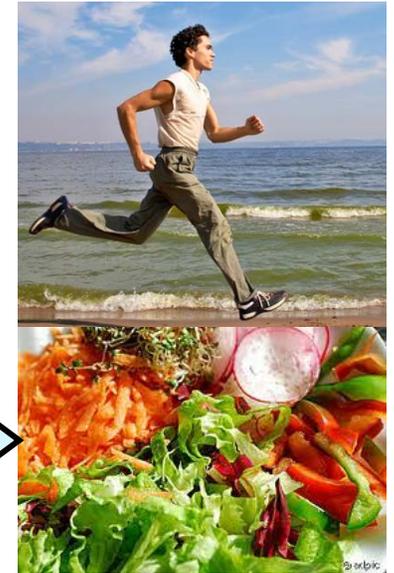
If all persons participating in health care consent to work for the common goal of "health", effectiveness will be improved and waste reduced.

Culture of Health



Thou shall not

Thou shall



1. A healthy life style cannot be ordered by law. It must become part of the culture.

2. An understanding of the Meikirch Model supports the process of developing a culture of health.

3. Teachers testify that the Meikirch Model is easily understood.



Conclusions I

1. Focusing health care systems on a realistic concept of health will reduce its waste and increase its effectiveness.
2. Creation of a culture of health with a realistic concept of health will reduce morbidities and mortalities.
3. Currently the Meikirch Model is the most realistic concept of health.

Conclusions 2

4. Implementation of the Meikirch-Model to prevent and control non-communicable diseases is the measure with the best cost/benefit ratio.

References:

Bircher J. Towards dynamic definition of health and disease. *Med Health Care Philos*, 2005; 8: 335 – 341.

Bircher J, Wehkamp K.H. *Das ungenutzte Potential der Medizin*. Rüffer and Rub Publ. Zürich, 2006.

Bircher J. and Wehkamp K.H. Health care needs to be focused on health. *Health* 2011; 3: 378 – 382, or open access: <http://www.scirp.org/journal/HEALTH>

Bircher J, Wehkamp KH. Meikirch postulates for medicine and health. www.psim.ch