

Biography

Harry Burns graduated in medicine from the University of Glasgow in 1974. He worked as a surgeon for 15 years and developed an interest in health inequalities while working in Glasgow Royal Infirmary, a university hospital in one of the poorest areas of the UK. He has been Medical Director of the Royal Infirmary, Director of Public Health for the City of Glasgow and, for the past 4 years, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland and Director of Health Improvement and Health Protection for the Scottish Government

Abstract

“Assets for Health and Development: the creation of individual resilience”

Evidence from many studies suggests that adverse social conditions erode the capacity to develop health through prolonged activation of a range of host defence systems such as the stress response. An understanding of the mechanisms by which these responses are activated is necessary if we are to target public policy effectively. Recent insights from developmental biology suggest that the capacity for health is determined to a large extent in the early years of life. This presentation will describe some of the evidence for the importance of early years in creating health and discuss some of the policy implications of this work.