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# Health, wellbeing, and family

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In Europe there are continual increases in Life Expectancy and also Healthy Life Expectancy in both men and women. Throughout Europe there are significant falls in mortality from major chronic diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease (CVD), and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Mortality is falling rapidly from myocardial infarction, stomach cancer (once the commonest cancers in Central and Eastern Europe), and lung cancer in men. However, lung cancer mortality is increasing in women, and colorectal cancer is increasing in both men and women. Ill-health, in particular chronic ill-health, can have a profound effect on the family, and not only from the chronic conditions mentioned above. The presence of disability, both physical and mental, can also have a profound effect on a family. As a society, we are not dealing with the growing problem posed by all forms of dementia.

Health is more than the absence of sickness. One of the commonest problems in a family is the issue of domestic violence, man on women but not infrequently

woman on man and, of course, both men and women on children. The problem of domestic violence is underestimated, is frequently fuelled by alcohol consumption, and ranges in its severity. Unemployment places a burden on individuals, families, and the community at large: the unemployment rate is currently 27% in South Africa. The presence of conflict can be a major strain on health and wellbeing.

Aneurin Bevan, father of the British NHS, wrote that 'Illness is neither an indulgence for which people have to pay nor an offence for which they should be penalised but a misfortune the cost of which should be shared by the community'. Promoting the development of the individual and the family means supporting and caring for every human person.

**Key words:** health, wellbeing, family.

## DISCLOSURE

The authors report no conflict of interests.