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# Health Care and the Arab Population

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2

## Background on Israel's Arab Population

- Israel has 1.2 million Arab citizens  
(about 20% of the population)

- . The **population** is young:  
51% are below age 19
- . The **Arab population** is highly concentrated geographically  
(mostly in small towns and villages)
- . The daily language is Arabic (not Hebrew)
- . Most of the Arabs are Muslim

3

## Differences between Arabs & Jews

Arabs tend to have...

- . Lower education
- . Larger families
- . Lower labor force participation of women
- . Lower incomes

4

## **Leading Causes of Death** (% of all deaths, 1997)

5

## **Diabetes Prevalence**

6

## **Lung Cancer: Age Standardized Mortality**

# Rates

7

## Health behaviors

Women: 8%

Men: 11%

Women: 24%

Men: 23%

### Physical activity

(25-64)

### Smoking (age 20 and over)

30% men

17% women

50% men

7% women

**Obesity (BMI>30)** (ages 25-64)

22.2% women

18.5% men

41.2% women

22.4% men

**Jews**

**Arabs**

8

## **The Arab Health Research Program**

- . A new, multi-year initiative of the Myers-JDC Brookdale

Institute  
to promote the provision of  
effective **health care**  
services to the **Arab**  
**population** in Israel

9

## Major current focus

To assess the extent of  
cultural sensitivity  
to the **Arab population** of  
**health** promotion programs,  
and identify ways to enhance  
it

10

## Special Features of the Study

- Takes a system perspective, looking at policies, organizations, program design and implementation
- Compares a range of organizations that play a key role in the development of **health** promotion programs
- Develops criteria for cultural sensitivity for the **Arab population**
- Directly evaluates the degree of cultural sensitivity in a range of programs
- Examines the reasons for relative success and failure and the lessons for change at all levels

# Contributions of the Study

- . Contributes to efforts to improve the **health of the Arab population**
- . Promotes equity in **health status and health care**
- . Contributes to cultural sensitivity in **health care** for all ethnic groups in Israel



12

# OVERVIEW OF STUDY VISIT AS THE 2004 WEINBERG SCHOLAR

- Presentation at Washington, D.C. national conference on cultural appropriateness in **health care**
- Presentations and professional meetings at Johns Hopkins, Case Western, and Columbia Universities
- Series of meetings with Jewish and **Arab** professionals and lay leaders in Cleveland, organized by the Cleveland Jewish Federation
- Series of site visits in New York organized by the Montefiore Medical Center

14

## Life Expectancy 2000

15

# **Infant Mortality in Israel Jews & Non-Jews 1955-2001**

**IM / 1000 Live Births**

16

# **Examples of Factors in Assuring Cultural Sensitivity for the Arab Population**

- Nutritional patterns (daily nutritional habits, traditional hospitality)
- Language (spoken/literary, translation)

of concepts, reference to symbols)

- Perceptions of body image (overweight/underweight)
- Social and religious norms (marriage between blood relatives, birth defects, abortions)