

CONCEPT  
EXPLAINER



WHAT IS

# Fundamental Cause Theory

swipe



# Health inequalities (HIs)

mean that people who live in disadvantaged areas have poorer health and die younger than those who live in wealthier areas. Some approaches for tackling health inequalities focus on things like smoking, diet, or exercise. But Fundamental Cause Theory (FCT) suggests the real issues lie deeper, in the social conditions that shape people's lives.



**FCT looks at the deeper causes** of HIs – the “*fundamental*” ones – which are inequalities in wealth, income, and power. It highlights how systems of privilege and disadvantage shape who stays healthy and who does not.



# FCT shifts the health

inequalities narratives from individuals and their health behaviours to examining the wider structures – economic, political and social – that create unfair and avoidable differences in health.



# Tackling inequalities

in income, wealth, and power is difficult in practice and requires political and economic commitment and reforms, that are slow and sometimes resisted. FCT challenges us to design policies and interventions that reduce these HIs at their roots, while also limiting the damage they cause in people's lives today.



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# Thanks for reading

react and share

