



Réseau-1 Québec



When all systems fail: the burden of managing health in socioeconomically deprived communities

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The Burden of Treatment Theory proposes patients experience poor health outcomes when the work associated with managing illness (treatment burden) outweighs an individual's capacity to carry it out. Many current health and self-management interventions are preferentially taken up by more affluent populations, and focus on individual behaviour change, often failing to consider social context or underlying patient capacity.

This presentation will present findings from ethnographic work in a primary care practice in the West of Scotland that has high levels of socioeconomic deprivation. It will explore how community experience of widespread social stigma, and "none of the systems working for you" influence engagement of individual patients in their care. In addition, it will explore the importance of the concepts of "authenticity", "challenge in the context of safe space" and "power of the peer". This work uncovered community strengths of high social capital and close social networks that can be harnessed to enhance community capacity in the development of future interventions and health service design.

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