1. Describe the main determinants of health.

Ans: Determinants of health fall under several broad categories:

- Policymaking
- Social factors
- Health services
- Individual behavior
- Biology and genetics

Policymaking

Policies at the local, state, and federal level affect individual and population health. Increasing taxes on tobacco sales, for example, can improve population health by reducing the number of people using tobacco products.

Social Factors

Social determinants of health reflect the social factors and physical conditions of the environment in which people are born, live, learn, play, work, and age. Also known as social and physical determinants of health, they impact a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes.

Health Services

Both access to health services and the quality of health services can impact health. Healthy People 2020 directly addresses access to health services as a topic area and incorporates quality of health services throughout a number of topic areas.

Individual Behavior

Individual behavior also plays a role in health outcomes. For example, if an individual quits smoking, his or her risk of developing heart disease is greatly reduced.

Biology and Genetics

Some biological and genetic factors affect specific populations more than others. For example, older adults are biologically prone to being in poorer health than adolescents due to the physical and cognitive effects of aging.

2. Explain the important characteristics for the identification of major communicable diseases.

Ans: A communicable disease is one that is spread from one person to another through a variety of ways that include: contact with blood and bodily fluids; breathing in an airborne virus; or by being bitten by an insect.

Reporting of cases of communicable disease is important in the planning and evaluation of disease prevention and control programs, in the assurance of appropriate medical therapy, and in the detection of common-source outbreaks. California law mandates healthcare providers and laboratories to report over 80 diseases or conditions to their local health department. Some examples of the reportable communicable diseases include Hepatitis A, B & C, influenza, measles, and salmonella and other food borne illnesses.

1. physical contact with an infected person, such as through touch (staphylococcus), sexual intercourse (gonorrhea, HIV), fecal/oral transmission (hepatitis A), or droplets (influenza, TB)
2. contact with a contaminated surface or object (Norwalk virus), food (salmonella, E. coli), blood (HIV, hepatitis B), or water (cholera);
3. bites from insects or animals capable of transmitting the disease (mosquito: malaria and yellow fever; flea: plague); and
4. travel through the air, such as tuberculosis or measles.