Health is determined by a range of factors that can either positively or negatively impact a community’s health status. These factors can range from environmental factors such as pollution and air quality to social factors such as work and unemployment. Social gradient refers to the fact that inequalities in a population lead to certain advantages and disadvantages in health. Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain. Unemployment is the state of not having any income. This essay will outline how these three factors can negatively impact the health status of a community.

Social gradient affects health status in a variety of ways, a large part of which is connected to the conditions you’re initially born into. An individual’s social gradient determines whether or not you have the resources necessary for adequate health. An individual who was born in a place with a low social gradient wouldn’t be able to receive an education nor have the same resources as people who are born in a place of higher social gradient. This leads to an immediate disadvantage, which would lead to the inability to gain the skills required to be competent in society, which leads to an overall decrease in health status and a lower quality of life, potentially decreasing life expectancy and thus having a decrease in health status. An example of when social gradient negatively impacts the health status of individuals would be how the people in the small town of Hinkley were born into a place with low social gradient. Hinkley is in the Mojave Desert where there’s little resources. This caused the residents to take what the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) told them and to not try to investigate the water further due to their lack of resources and education to do so. This lead to the build-up of the hexavalent chromium in the water, leading to the high incidence of cancer in the people who drink out of the contaminated water. Social gradient correlates with individuals’ quality of life and life expectancy, thus being able to negatively impact the health status of individuals and communities.

Stress is a factor that needs to be considered when determining the health status of a community. Stress puts mental and emotional strain on the individual, which leads to a constant state of anxiety. This has a negative effect on the body, which leads to symptoms such as low energy, headaches and insomnia, thus resulting in a decline in health status. An example of stress negatively impacting the health status of individuals would be in Erin’s life when Erin decides to initially decline the offer when George offers to take her out to dinner to apologise for revving his motorcycle engine, causing a loud noise across the whole neighbourhood. Due to Erin’s past divorces, she felt betrayed by the men who she loved and trusted, causing her to live in a constant state of stress which tells her that men can’t be trusted when it comes to relationships. This lead to a lot of emotional pain for her, causing her to isolate herself from men and become a single mother. This resulted in a lot of other stressors, largely because she has three children to care for. It’s because of her deliberate self-isolation that she has to live with the anxiety that her children rely on her, which resulted in emotional symptoms such as becoming easily agitated and being pessimistic, thus having a negative impact on health status. Stress can have both physical and psychological effects on individuals and therefore can have a negative effect on health status.

Unemployment can have positive or negative effects on a community’s health status. Being unemployed means not having income, which leads to less access to the resources necessary for health such as food and shelter, as well as the psychological stress that the individual may go through, thus having a negative impact on health status. An example of unemployment negatively affecting an individual’s health status would be in Erin’s life when Erin has been through a long period of time being unemployed. This caused her to feed and care for her children by herself with no one to help her. This led to a lot of psychological stress since she was struggling to find money and a job. Erin’s unemployment resulted in a lack of access to food, as we could see when she skipped meals to save money, leading to lack of nutrition and therefore a decline in health status. Unemployment can drastically negatively affect health status and can have negative impacts on the individuals involved.