Physiological Needs

The Maslow Five-Stage Hierarchy of needs can be thought of as a pyramid. The base of the pyramid, and first priority, is physiological needs, and include oxygen, food/water, elimination, temperature and sleep. Deficiency needs are grouped in the first four levels of the pyramid, and include physiological, safety and security, love and belonging and esteem needs. These needs are to be more or less met before progressing to higher needs on the pyramid. Individuals experience increased motivation when addressing their deficiency needs, and will experience decreased motivation once their need is satisfactorily met. The hierarchy is not rigid, but reflects a flexibility of needs, where external circumstances and individual differences can dictate the priority of needs. Finally, prioritization of patients relies on nursing judgement to determine who's need takes precedence, and physiological needs often are prioritized first during nursing exams.



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Physiological Hierarchy

First Basic Need
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The first basic need in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is physiological needs, which appears at the base of the pyramid. It begins the need priorities for an individual to achieve greater physical and psychological health. Aspects of physiologic needs include biologic requirements for human survival, including air, food, drink, and sleep.

Physiological Need

Oxygen
O2-tank
Oxygen is the most fundamental need. Oxygen is required by all cells in the human body to survive. Oxygenation of cells is carried out by the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Any alteration in the function of the respiratory and cardiovascular systems results in an increased demand for oxygen.

Food/Water
Food and Water
Adequate calories and proper fluid balance are required to sustain life. Inadequate nutrient consumption and fluid intake can result in nutrient, electrolyte imbalances and dehydration that can lead to many health problems and death.

Elimination
Toilet
Elimination allows for the removal of waste products. Waste is removed from the body through skin, lungs, kidneys, and intestines. Ineffective waste removal can lead to toxin buildup, and health problems.

Temperature
Thermometer
Regulating temperature is one of the efforts made by the body to maintain homeostasis. The body attempts to sustain body temperature at 98.6 degrees F (37 degrees C). Shivering and sweating are mechanisms that help control this temperature.

Rest
Bed
Rest is another essential physiological need because it allows time for the body to rejuvenate. Factors that can affect sleep include a person's age, environment, stress, and drug use.

Shelter
Tent
Having adequate shelter is an essential basic need as it ensures that the body can maintain physiological health. It is important to note that some sources may also include shelter as a "safety and security need" as well.

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