Health Divides: Where you live can kill you

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Today, Americans live three years less than their counterparts in Spain or Sweden. Scottish men live more than two years less than English men and Northerners in England live two years less than Southerners. Londoners living in Canning Town at one end of the Jubilee tube line live seven years less than those living eight stops along in Westminster. There is a 25 year gap in life expectancy between residents of the Iberville and Naverre suburbs of the US city of New Orleans – although they are just three miles apart. This talk examines these inequalities in life and death, showing that geographical health divides are longstanding and universal – present to a greater of lesser extent across both time and space. Drawing on case studies of the US health disadvantage, the North South health divide in England and local health inequalities across the towns and cities of wealthy countries, this talk explores the historical and contemporary nature of geographical inequalities in health. It looks at how they have evolved over time, what they are like today, and their social, environmental, economic and – ultimately - political causes. It examines what has and what could be done by governments to reduce these inequalities and how health divides might develop in the future. The talk presents a wealth of international, historical and contemporary data, to demonstrate how and why geography is a matter of life and death. Talk is based on Clare’s recent book Health Divides: Where you live can kill you (Policy Press, 2016).