

Recommendations for Advancing Health Equity

Race, Healthcare, and Health Disparities: A Critical Review and Recommendations for Advancing Health Equity

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Journal Article

Race, Healthcare, and Health Disparities: A Critical Review and Recommendations for Advancing Health Equity

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Abstract

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An overwhelming body of evidence points to an inextricable link between race and health disparities in the United States. Although race is best understood as a social construct, its role in health outcomes has historically been attributed to increasingly debunked theories of underlying biological and genetic differences across races. Recently, growing calls for health equity and social justice have raised awareness of the impact of implicit bias and structural racism on social determinants of health, healthcare quality, and ultimately, health outcomes. This more nuanced recognition of the role of race in health disparities has, in turn, facilitated introspective racial disparities research, root cause analyses, and changes in practice within the medical community. Examining the complex interplay between race, social determinants of health, and health outcomes allows systems of health to create mechanisms for checks and balances that mitigate unfair and avoidable health inequalities.

As one of the specialties most intertwined with social medicine, emergency medicine (EM) is ideally

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