Learning to Be an Antiracist Healthcare Provider

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Goals for this hour:
• Unpack critical definitions
• Consider the multilayered impact of racism in medicine
• Highlight strategies to create and implement antiracist policies and practices

What does it mean to be...

Antiracist? (What is antiracism?)

AMA, AAMC, APHA: Racism is a public health crisis.

Racist? (What is racism?)

Race?

Definitions - Ibram Kendi, PhD

• Racist: one who is supporting a racist policy by their actions or inaction, or expressing a racist idea
• Racist policy: Any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups
• Antiracist: One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea
• Antiracist policy: Any measure that produces or sustains racial equity between racial groups
• “Policy” – written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations and guidelines that govern people
• EVERY policy in every institution in every community is producing or sustaining either inequity or equity between racial groups
What is equity?

Carr, Quezada, et al. Gastro 159(5), Nov 2020

Reframing “Racist”

Racist: Any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups

Fill in the blank:

Statement

Idea

Policy

Decision

Habit

Practice

Test

Form

Study

What is “Race”?  

- Google: Race (v)
  1. Compete with another or others to see who is fastest at covering a set course or achieving an objective.
  2. move or progress swiftly or at full speed. “I raced into the house”

- Census:
  • Racial data collected “in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB); OMB requires five minimum categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.”
  • “Racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically.”
**What is Race?**

- Encyclopedia Britannica:
  - “Race, the idea that the human species is divided into distinct groups on the basis of inherited physical and behavioral differences. Genetic studies in the late 20th century refuted the existence of biogenetically distinct races, and scholars now argue that “races” are cultural interventions reflecting specific attitudes and beliefs that were imposed on different populations in the wake of western European conquests beginning in the 15th century.”

- National Human Genome Research Institute:
  - “Final analysis of the Human Genome Project in April 2003 confirmed that the 3 billion base pairs of genetic letters in humans were 99.9 percent identical in every person. Individuals are, on average, 0.1 percent different genetically from every other person on the planet.”

**So where did the term “Race” come from?**

- Pieter Camper (1722–1789), distinguished both as an artist and as an anatomist, published some lectures that laid the foundation of much work. Camper invented the “facial angle,” a measure meant to determine intelligence among various species.

- Arthur de Gobineau’s *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853–1855), a founding work of racial segregationism that made three main divisions between races, based not on color but on climatic conditions and geographic location, and privileged the “Aryan” race.

- François Bernier (1620–1688) was a French physician and traveler. In 1684 he published a brief essay dividing humanity into what he called “races”, distinguishing individuals, and particularly women, by skin color and a few other physical traits.

**What is Race?**

- At no point, from the first attempts at classifying human populations in the 17th and 18th centuries to the present day, have scientists agreed on the number of races of humankind, the features to be used in the identification of races, or the meaning of race itself...Thus, race has never in the history of its use had a precise meaning.
And YET… without precise meaning, Race has granted immense POWER to some and represents meaningful social impact for ALL.

“Race is a power construct of collected or merged difference that lives socially.” - Ibram X. Kendi, PhD

Race and Power in US
- Arizona and New Mexico were not recognized as states until 1912, because Mexicans and American Indians were the demographically and politically dominant groups in those regions.
- “How should we govern the mongrel race which inhabits the Mexican lands? Could we admit them to seats in our Senate or House of Representatives? Are they capable of self-government as States of this Confederacy?” - Secretary of State James Buchanan.
- Puerto Rico is an American colony and general election voting is still not possible on the island.
- November 2020 statehood referendum - PR voted for state status.

How do Race and Racism “live” in medicine?

Race and Patient Care
- US has highest maternal mortality rate in the developed world.
- 2018 maternal deaths per 100,000 births:
  - Black mothers = 37.1
  - White mothers = 14.7
  - Hispanic women = 11.8

Race and Medical Education

- Lack of diversity in patient examples - including
derm!!
- Race as biological, neglecting to mention Social Determinants of Health
- Implicit messages about race and behavior
- Esophageal cancer, trauma lectures
- Racialized patients vs just “patients”
- Other examples (Weight, gender bias)
- “Female, fat and forty”
- “FAT RN”

Nieblas-Bedolla et al. Journal of Academic Medicine

Race and Biomedical Research

- Tuskegee Syphilis study 1932-1972 by the United States Public Health Service with Tuskegee Syphilis, an HBCU in Alabama
- Guise of free medical care => placebo
- 6 months => 40 years
- PCN was discovered as tx for syphilis in 1947
- Baltimore Lead Paint Study 1993 by Hopkins KKI
- Lead paint was banned in Baltimore new construction in 1951
- Families actively recruited to live in housing w lead paint
- Children w permanent neurological defects

Race and Biomedical Research

- Continues to propose Race as a biological/genetic proxy for disease, failing to acknowledge SDOH
- Racism, rather than race, is a powerful Social Determinant of Health
- Persistent lack of diversity in study participants
- Lack of diversity in NIH grants awarded (race and gender)
- Research journals are still publishing literature that perpetuates bias and stereotypes
Race and Community - HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION

- Baltimore was the home of REDLINING and BLOCKBUSTING
  - “Black Butterfly and White L”
- Baltimore remains a hypersegregated city
- Transportation to and from West Baltimore is dysfunctional
  - Red line light rail project was funded, but cancelled
- Class action lawsuit by NAACP and ACLU closed without finding by current administration

Race and Community - FOOD


Race and Community - EDUCATION
So HOW can we be Antiracist providers, educators, & researchers?

- There is no such thing as “Race neutrality” or being “not racist”
- To dismantle racism, aka to be antiracist, we must take a proactive approach

How we can change policy & practice to support equity

- Equitable Faculty Search Policy
- Educational Content Review Committee
- Required unconscious bias for all faculty
  - Admissions: Priority for admissions committee, interviewers and diversified the committee

How we can change policy & practice to support equity

- Examine and refine our:
  - Research questions
  - Curricula, speaker topics and speakers
  - Accessibility: transportation, language, technology, gender-neutral bathrooms
  - Representation on committees and leadership structures

What can we do right now?

- Stop using the term “Caucasian”; instead use “white” or “European ancestry”.
- Stop using the “African American GFR”.
- Start thinking critically about how we include race in case discussions with our students, residents, fellows and faculty, and speak up to ensure social determinants of health including systemic racism and other biases are recognized.
- Do the same as above for our research studies
- Look for, expect, ask for racial and gender equity on panels & committees
- WC4BL, Student Diversity Council, Minority Housestaff Organization

“First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Councilor the Ku Klux Klan, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to “order” than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: “I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action”; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a “more convenient season.” Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than outright rejection.”

—Letter From a Birmingham Jail, 1963
“How to Be An antiracist” by Ibram X. Kendi, PhD
• “Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City” by Antero Pietila
• “Inventing Latinos: A New Story of American Racism” by Laura E. Gómez, JD, PhD
• “White Fragility” Robin DiAngelo
• https://www.ted.com/talks/dorothy_roberts_the_problem_with_race_based_medic.pdf
• file:///Users/sandraquezada/Downloads/Changing+How+Race+Is+Portrayed+in+M.pdf
• http://www.aamc.org/news_insights/racism-and-health-reading-list

Thank you!!!