launching our Campaign Against Racism

building community, being community

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Sharing Strategies for Health Equity: Social Medicine in Action
Social Medicine Consortium
Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment (COPE)

Churchrock, New Mexico
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Dual Reality: A restaurant saga
I looked up and noticed a sign . . .
Racism structures “Open/Closed” signs in our society.
It is difficult to recognize a system of inequity that privileges us.

Those on the outside are very aware of the two-sided nature of the sign.
Is there really a two-sided sign?

Hard to know, when only see “Open”. A privilege not to HAVE to know. Once DO know, can choose to act.
What is racism?

A system

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What is [inequity]?

A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on [fill in the blank]
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Many axes of inequity

- “Race”
- Gender
- Ethnicity and indigenous status
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- Labor roles and social class markers
- Nationality, language, and legal status
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
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These are risk MARKERS
Levels of health intervention
Jones CP et al. *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 2009.
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Jones CP et al. *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 2009.
Addressing the social determinants of health

Primary prevention

Safety net programs and secondary prevention

Medical care and tertiary prevention

But how do disparities arise?

- Differences in the quality of care received within the health care system
- Differences in access to health care, including preventive and curative services
- Differences in life opportunities, exposures, and stresses that result in differences in underlying health status


Jones CP et al. *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 2009.
Differences in access to care

Differences in exposures and opportunities

Differences in quality of care
(ambulance slow or goes the wrong way)

Jones CP et al. *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 2009.
Addressing the social determinants of equity:

Why are there differences in resources along the cliff face?

Why are there differences in who is found at different parts of the cliff?

Jones CP et al. *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 2009.
3 dimensions of health intervention
3 dimensions of health intervention

*Health and social services*

Jones CP *et al.* *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 2009.
3 dimensions of health intervention

Health and social services

Addressing social determinants of health
3 dimensions of health intervention

Health and social services

Addressing social determinants of health

Addressing social determinants of equity

“Why do we spend so much money on ambulances at the bottom of the cliff?”

Narrow focus on the individual

Jones CP et al. *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 2009.
“Why are the Greenies launching themselves over the edge of the cliff?”
Narrow focus on the individual

Narrow focus on the individual
Narrow focus on the individual
A-historical culture

Jones CP et al. *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 2009.
“This situation looks fine to me. What’s the problem with a three-dimensional cliff?”
Narrow focus on the individual
A-historical culture
Myth of meritocracy
Levels of racism: A theoretic framework and A Gardener’s Tale

Jones CP

“How is racism operating here?”

- **Identify mechanisms**
  - **Structures**: the who?, what?, when?, and where? of decision-making
  - **Policies**: the written how?
  - **Practices and norms**: the unwritten how?
  - **Values**: the why?

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What is health equity?

- "Health equity" is assurance of the conditions for optimal health for all people

- Achieving health equity requires
  - Valuing all individuals and populations equally
  - Recognizing and rectifying historical injustices
  - Providing resources according to need

- Health disparities will be eliminated when health equity is achieved

Barriers to achieving health equity

- **Narrow focus on the individual**
  - Self-interest narrowly defined
  - Limited sense of interdependence
  - Limited sense of collective efficacy
  - Systems and structures as invisible or irrelevant

- **A-historical culture**
  - The present as disconnected from the past
  - Current distribution of advantage/disadvantage as happenstance
  - Systems and structures as givens and immutable

- **Myth of meritocracy**
  - Role of hard work
  - Denial of racism
  - Two babies: Equal potential or equal opportunity?
ICERD

- **International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination**
  - International anti-racism treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1965
  - [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx)
- US signed in 1966
- US ratified in 1994
Current status

- 3rd US report submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2013
  

- 82 parallel reports submitted by civil society organizations

- CERD considered at its 85th session (13-14 Aug 2014)
CERD Concluding Observations

- 14-page document (25 Sep 2014) available online
symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUSA%2fCO%2f7-9&Lang=en

- Concerns and recommendations
  - Racial profiling (paras 8 and 18)
  - Residential segregation (para 13)
  - Achievement gap in education (para 14)
  - Differential access to health care (para 15)
  - Disproportionate incarceration (para 20)
CERD Concluding Observations

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- Concerns and recommendations
  - “The Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to raise public awareness and knowledge of the Convention throughout its territory” (para 32)
  - “The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a national action plan to combat structural racial discrimination” (para 25)
American Public Health Association
National Campaign Against Racism

- Active website: www.apha.org/racism
- Anti-Racism Collaborative with 8 Collective Action Teams
  - Communication and Dissemination
  - Education and Development
  - Global Matters
  - History
  - Liaison and Partnership
  - Organizational Excellence
  - Policy and Legislation
  - Science and Publications
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Guiding questions

- How can we use the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) to support anti-racism work in the United States?
- What can we learn from anti-racism work in other nations?
Anti-Racism Collaborative
Communication and Dissemination

Guiding questions

- How can we support the naming of racism in all public and private spaces?
- What tools and strategies are needed to start community conversations on racism?
Guiding questions

- How can we support training around issues of “race”, racism, and anti-racism at educational institutions of all levels?
- How does effective anti-racism curriculum look?
Guiding questions

- What is the history of successful anti-racism struggle in the United States and around the world? How can this history guide our anti-racism work today?
- How can we institutionalize attention to history in all decision-making processes?
Anti-Racism Collaborative
Liaison and Partnership

Guiding questions
- What anti-racism work is happening at the community level?
- What anti-racism work is happening in other sectors?
- How can we create linkages?
Guiding questions

- How do we answer the question “How is racism operating here?” in each of our settings?
- How do we examine structures, policies, practices, norms, and values?
Anti-Racism Collaborative
Policy and Legislation

- Guiding questions
  - What are current policy and legislative strategies to address and dismantle racism?
  - What new strategies should we propose?
Guiding questions

- What research has been done to examine the impacts of racism on the health and well-being of the nation and world?
- What intervention strategies have been evaluated?
- What are next steps?
Life on a Conveyor Belt: Moving to action
Racism is most often passive
1. Name racism
2. Ask “How is racism operating here?”
3. Organize and strategize to act
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Levels of Racism

- Institutionalized
- Personally-mediated
- Internalized

Institutionalized racism

- Differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society, by “race”

- **Examples**
  - Housing, education, employment, income
  - Medical facilities
  - Clean environment
  - Information, resources, voice

- **Explains the association between social class and “race”**

Personally-mediated racism

- Differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of others, by “race”
- Differential actions based on those assumptions

- Prejudice and discrimination

- Examples
  - Police brutality
  - Physician disrespect
  - Shopkeeper vigilance
  - Waiter indifference
  - Teacher devaluation

Internalized racism

- Acceptance by the stigmatized “races” of negative messages about our own abilities and intrinsic worth

- Examples
  - Self-devaluation
  - “White man’s ice is colder” syndrome
  - Resignation, helplessness, hopelessness

- Accepting limitations to our full humanity

Levels of Racism: A Gardener’s Tale

Who is the gardener?

- Power to decide
- Power to act
- Control of resources

- Dangerous when
  - Allied with one group
  - Not concerned with equity

Guiding questions

- How can we use the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) to support anti-racism work in the United States?
- What can we learn from anti-racism work in other nations?

Possible activities

- Disseminate information on US obligations under ICERD
- Scan anti-racism efforts in other countries
- Contribute to a global conversation on social equity
National Campaign Against Racism

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