

Optimizing Student Learning, Management and Assessment: Addressing the Social Determinants of Health

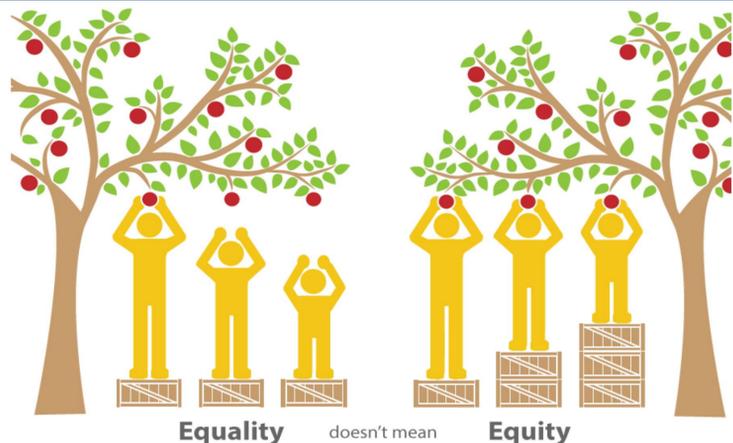
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Background

- It is well accepted that social determinants impact an individual's ability to live healthy and be healthy.¹
- The Liaison Committee on Medical Education requires that medical school curricula include education about the SDOH.²
- However, this recognition is not sufficient to produce domain-specific competence in primary care providers.

Addressing the social determinants of health is a primary strategy to attaining health equity



Research Objectives

Hypothesis

Although there is growing consensus that medical students should understand the SDOH in order to provide optimal care, there is limited guidance on what to teach, how to teach it, and how to evaluate students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the current gaps in training regarding SDOH and what barriers exist in providing this education?
- 2) What are student and faculty attitudes regarding their familiarity with SDOH and how it impacts day-to-day care?
- 3) What is consensus best-practice that can inform the design of future curricula?

Social Determinants of Health:

The conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems (World Health Organization)³

Methods

Study Design

Phase 1

- Conduct systematic review of existing SDOH curricula and prepare scoping review article
- Review and collect educational curriculum and assessment tools to identify most effective tools for teaching SDOH
- Contact authors of key manuscripts and interview students and faculty from medical schools with robust curricula
- Attend relevant meetings and interview key learners and faculty to characterize attitudes regarding instruction in this domain.
- Synthesize information to serve as foundation of Phase 2.

Phase 2

- Assemble expert panel identified from the literature review and other key informants
- Engage panel in a modified Delphi method to define optimal strategies to teach and assess learning about SDOH
- Refine information to propose a framework to educate students about SDOH and optimal strategies to assess and manage them.

Analyses

- Develop a consensus framework for teaching about the SDOH
- This framework will prepare for experimental studies in Years 2-5 to compare specific curricula and assessment methods

Table 1. Round 1 survey question regarding knowledge about issues that impact access to care

	Not Important		Very Important		
	1	2	3	4	5
Factors related to accessing and using transportation	<input type="radio"/>				
Factors related to insurance coverage	<input type="radio"/>				
Factors related to providing and accessing charity care	<input type="radio"/>				
Factors affecting availability of mental health services	<input type="radio"/>				
Factors affecting availability of dental services	<input type="radio"/>				
Factors affecting availability of primary care	<input type="radio"/>				

Results

Figure 1. Results from Modified Delphi: Round 1

	High Importance	Low Importance
Social Environment 18 topics, range: 3.5-4.5	Racism Discrimination & Stigma Health Care System & Policy	After School Programs Exercise and Wellness classes
Built Environment 17 topics, range: 3-4.5	Availability of Grocery Stores Open Space Proximity to Mental Health Services	Bike Network Plans Shared Use Agreements
Access to Care 18 topics, range: 3.75-4.5	Societal Influences: Segregation, Racism	School-Based Health Centers

Implications for Primary Care Training

Medical students know that SDOH are important to a patient's health. However, they do not know what their role is in addressing SDOH. They do have some knowledge gaps, especially in the policy sphere, but for the most part the students want to learn skills to help mitigate the effects of SDOH

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References

- ¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2016. *A framework for educating health professionals to address the social determinants of health*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: 10.17226/21923.
- ² LCME. Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs 2015:10-1.
- ³ WHO. 2016b. Social determinants of health. http://www.who.int/topics/social_determinants/en