



Oncology Social Work Health Disparities



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Biography

I am from Lake City, SC a small town in SC. I graduated from Coastal Carolina University in 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Women's Health Studies. I wanted to further my education and I completed my Master's in Social Work from Winthrop University in 2022. Before graduating I gained a lot of experience in the substance abuse field as a substance abuse disorder case manager at a healthcare facility. Upon graduating with my master's I became a substance abuse counselor and a coordinator for the Medication Assistance Program for substance abuse at a Department of Alcohol and Drug Facility. Last year I became a licensed clinical social worker for the state of North Carolina and I am now a part-time therapist. As a kid, I always said I wanted to help others when I grew up. I get to do that every day as a social worker! I am a daughter, sister, auntie, and friend! I take pride in helping others and I truly believe one of my many purposes in life is to help others!



Learning Outcomes

- Learn about health disparities that can affect patient's treatment.
- Gain knowledge of the role of an oncology social worker to prevent cancer health disparities.



Cancer Disparities

Cancer disparities refer to the unequal burden of cancer incidence, prevalence, mortality, and survivorship among different population groups. Various factors, including socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, geographic location, and access to healthcare, influence these disparities. Studies have consistently shown that certain communities, such as racial and ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, and rural populations, experience higher cancer incidence rates, worse outcomes, and limited access to quality care.

Kale S, Hirani S, Vardhan S, Mishra A, Ghode DB, Prasad R, Wanjari M. Addressing Cancer Disparities Through Community Engagement: Lessons and Best Practices. *Cureus*. 2023 Aug 14;15(8):e43445. doi: 10.7759/cureus.43445. PMID: 37711952; PMCID: PMC10498131.

Which U.S. Population Groups Experience Cancer Health Disparities?

According to the National Cancer Institute, cancer health disparities in the United States are adverse differences in cancer measures such as number of new cases, number of deaths, cancer-related health complications, survivorship and quality of life after cancer treatment, screening rates, and stage at diagnosis that exist among certain population groups including:

Individuals belonging to different ancestry, race, or ethnicity



Individuals of low socioeconomic status



Individuals who lack or have limited health insurance coverage



Residents in certain U.S. geographic locations, such as rural areas, or territories, such as Puerto Rico and Guam



Members of the sexual and gender minority communities



Certain immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers



Individuals with disabilities



Adolescents and young adults

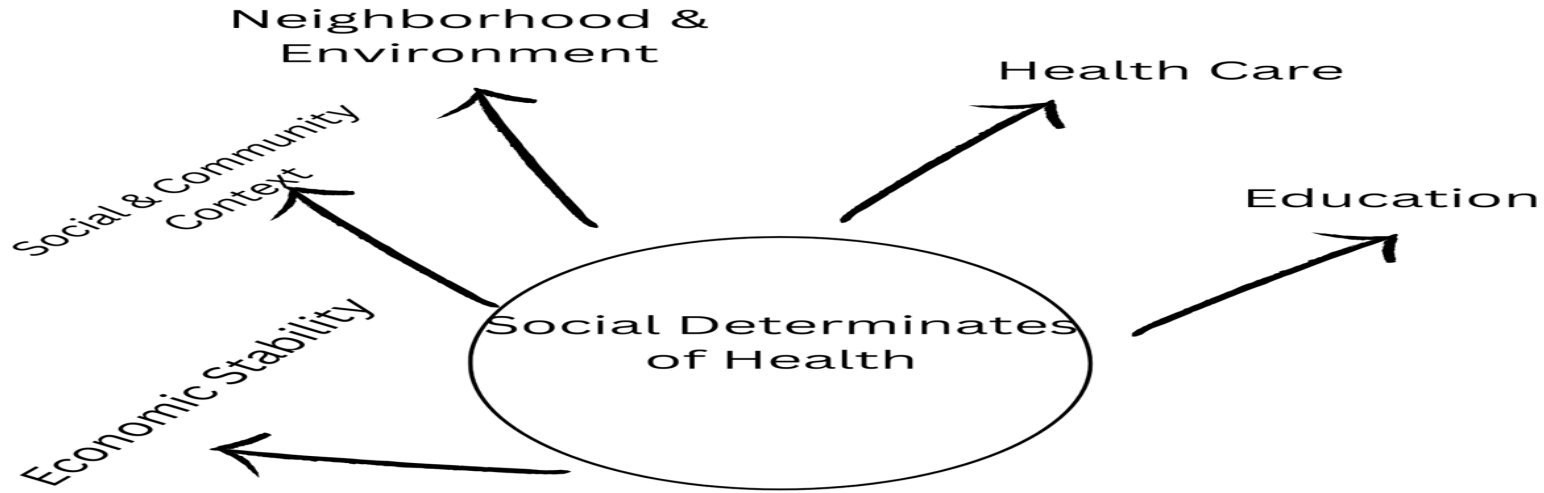


Elderly



It is important to note that some populations may carry even a higher burden of cancer because they simultaneously fall into more than one of these categories.

SDOH Screening



SDOH Screening

Achieving cancer health equity requires broad approaches that address the social, economic, and environmental factors that influence health. The social determinants of health, which are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age and factors such as socioeconomic status, education, neighborhood, employment, and social support, should be addressed, in addition to access to health care. Addressing the social determinants of health is critical to achieving health equity, and community-engaged strategies are an essential way to do so.

Patel MI, Lopez AM, Blackstock W, Reeder-Hayes K, Moushey EA, Phillips J, Tap W. Cancer Disparities and Health Equity: A Policy Statement From the American Society of Clinical Oncology. *J Clin Oncol*. 2020 Oct 10;38(29):3439-3448. doi: 10.1200/JCO.20.00642. Epub 2020 Aug 12. Erratum in: *J Clin Oncol*. 2020 Nov 20;38(33):3976. doi: 10.1200/JCO.20.03019. PMID: 32783672; PMCID: PMC7527158.

Socioeconomic Factors and Cancer Disparities

- Gas
- Food
- Housing
- Bills

Resources Provided To Decrease Socioeconomic Factors and Cancer Disparities

- To decrease patients not being able to make it to medical appointments with the oncologist and for chemotherapy. As a social worker, I can provide \$25 gas cards to patients provided by the American Cancer Society. I apply for patients with breast cancer diagnoses to get gas assistance through the SOS Suzy Lowcountry Foundation and Pink Aid Purse Fund.
- To decrease food insecurity among cancer patients. As a social worker, I refer patients to get assistance with EBT by referring them to Community Health Workers for assistance with EBT application. I refer the patient to local food banks in their area for assistance.
- The patient may need assistance with finding housing. I refer patients to the local affordable housing authority in their areas.
- To assist patients with bills they need assistance with. I apply for patients to get assistance with bills from programs they can get assisted with based on their cancer diagnosis. As a social worker, I am able to apply for MUSC Foundation assistance for cancer patients that help with numerous bills for patients provided by Hollings Cancer Center in Charleston, SC. Utilizing local organizations that help with bills.

Lack Of Health Insurance Factors and Cancer Disparities

- Lack of access to cancer screenings.
- Can't afford out of pocket costs for medical treatment.
- Patient not coming to medical appointments due to lack of health insurance.

Resources Provided To Decrease Lack of Health Insurance and Cancer Disparities

- As a social worker, I refer patients to Palmetto Project for assistance with applying for health insurance coverage that includes Medicaid, Medicare, Marketplace, and private insurance at no cost to the patient.
- Referring patient if needed to Community Health Worker for Medicaid application assistance.
- Assisting patients and coordinating with financial counselors at the hospital to assist with medical treatment with the financial assistance program MUSC provides for low socioeconomic status patients.

Immigrants, Refugees, or Asylum Seekers/ Factors and Cancer Disparities

- Lack of medical treatment based on immigrant status.
- Not being able to get required treatment due to non- citizen status.

Immigrants, Refugees, or Asylum Seekers/ Factors and Cancer Disparities Resources Provided

- Referring patients to Catholic Charities of South Carolina for Immigration Legal Services that include:
 - Consultations on eligibility for immigration status in the U.S.
 - Filing for Lawful Permanent Residency in the U.S. through family members.
 - Immigrants to consular process through the U.S. consulates abroad.
 - Filing for Waivers of grounds of inadmissibility.
 - Assisting immigrants in applying for Naturalization, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Deferred Action for - Childhood Arrivals (DACA), extensions of non-immigrant visas, and removal of conditions on residency;
 - Filing for renewal of work permits and Lawful Permanent Resident cards.
 - Assisting immigrant victims of crimes to file for U visas and self-petitions under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

Resources Provided To Decrease Individuals With Disabilities And Cancer Disparities

- Referring patients to the Social Security Disability office to apply for disability. Referring patients to a community health worker for application assistance if the patient needs assistance applying.
- Refer patient to associations related to their disability for assistance/resources. For example, referring deaf or blind patients to the South Carolina Commission for the Blind.

Resources Provided To Decrease Individuals For Elderly

- Getting elderly patients assistance from South Carolina Department on Aging. Resources Include:
 - Meals On Wheels
 - Home Health Aide Assistance
 - Family Caregiver Support

Citations

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