The Immediate and Lasting Impact of COVID-19 on Adolescents

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Adolescence

• Adolescents make up 25% of the population

• Adolescents are one of the most racially and ethnically diverse age groups in the U.S.

• Adolescence is a critical developmental stage

• It is a period with brain plasticity and rapid growth

• Young people develop habits, have experiences that impact physical, psychological and social health and well-being
  • may be transmitted into adulthood
  • may be transmitted intergenerationally

https://idph.iowa.gov/adolescent-health
# Social Determinants of Health

## Economic Stability
- Employment
- Income
- Expenses
- Debt
- Medical bills
- Support

## Neighborhood and Physical Environment
- Housing
- Transportation
- Safety
- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Walkability
- Zip code / geography

## Education
- Literacy
- Language
- Early childhood education
- Vocational training
- Higher education

## Food
- Hunger
- Access to healthy options

## Community and Social Context
- Social integration
- Support systems
- Community engagement
- Discrimination
- Stress

## Health Care System
- Health coverage
- Provider availability
- Provider linguistic and cultural competency
- Quality of care

## Health Outcomes
- Mortality
- Morbidity
- Life Expectancy
- Health Care Expenditures
- Health Status
- Functional Limitations

[Image: Diagram showing interconnected circles of Economic Stability, Neighborhood and Built Environment, Education, Social and Community Context, and Health and Health Care, with a table outlining the social determinants and their impact on health outcomes.]
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Mental illness
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Home violence
- Divorce
- Physical abuse
- Incarcerated relative

Adverse Circuitry Expression
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Epilepsy
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- ADHD
- Cerebral Palsy
- Kernicterus
- Fragile X Syndrome

Adverse Community Environments
- High Unemployment
- Limited economic mobility
- Food deserts
- Poor housing conditions
- Low access to social services
- Unsafe neighborhoods and parks
- Systemic racism

Adverse Cultural Exposures
- Homophobia
- Xenophobia
- Racism
- Ageism
- Ableism
- Sexism
- Classism
Racism, COVID and Health
A Crisis Within a Crisis

A conceptual model of the relationship between racism and health

Racial discrimination → Psychological stress → Assault

Denial of goods, resources or services
Decreased quality of or access to health care

Mental health outcomes
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance use/misuse

Psychological symptoms

Negative coping behaviours

Physiological stress response

Physical health outcomes
- Cardiovascular disease
- Decreased birth weights
- Increased blood pressure
- Physical injury

Source: Paradies et al; Systemic Reviews 2013 2:85
COVID-19 Racial Disparities

• History shows that severe illness and death rates tend to be higher for people of color during public health emergencies

• Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put some people of color at increased risk of getting COVID-19 or experiencing severe illness, regardless of age

• Blacks, Hispanics and Latinos, and American Indians/Alaska Natives have higher rates of hospitalization and death

Why Racial Health Disparities Exist During COVID Among People of Color

• **Living Conditions**
  - May be more likely to live in densely populated areas with residential housing segregation
  - Racial segregation linked to health conditions (i.e., asthma) put people at increased risk of getting severely ill or dying
  - Reservation homes and homes in the Black Belt may be more likely to lack complete plumbing
  - People of color may live in multigenerational households and multi-family households and may find it hard to protect older family members or quarantine if space in the household is limited.
  - Over-represented in jails, prisons, homeless shelters, and detention centers
    - High rates of infection and death compared with general population
    - Number of prison residents tested positive was 5.5 times higher (JAMA)

• **Work Circumstances**
  - Being an essential worker: such as health care, meat-packing plants, grocery stores, cleaning services and factories,
  - Some may need to continue working in these jobs because of their economic circumstances
  - Not having sick leave and/or childcare
  - Income, education, and joblessness
  - On average, earn less than whites, have less accumulated wealth, have lower levels of educational attainment, and have higher rates of joblessness

• **Health Circumstances**
  - More likely to be uninsured
  - May not receive care because of distrust of the healthcare system, language barriers, or cost of missing work
  - Biases in the healthcare system
  - Experience higher rates of chronic conditions at earlier ages and higher death rates
  - Racism, stigma, and systemic inequities undermine prevention efforts, increase levels of chronic and toxic stress

Select Important Public Policy

- Affordable Care Act Protections & other efforts to expand access
  - Parental insurance for adolescents and young adults through age 26
  - Medicaid Expansion

- CARES Act
  - Eviction protections
  - Stimulus protections
  - Enhanced unemployment benefits

- Voting Rights Advancement Act

- Social, criminal justice and police reform

- Ensure shelters, crisis centers, mental health and educational services are available

- Develop policies that promote a living wage and equity and eliminate disparate living, work and health conditions

Socio-Ecological Model
Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation

Though I am gone, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe.