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Transforming the Social, Structural, and Clinical Determinants with Our Nation’s Most Vulnerable Populations

Traditional biomedical explanations of disease tend to focus on biologic and genetic factors as well as individual health behavior as determinants of who gets sick and from what conditions. Although there is little doubt that genetics and lifestyle play an important role in shaping the overall health of individuals, interdisciplinary researchers have demonstrated how the environmental conditions in which people are born, live, work, play, and age are equally as important and play a role in shaping health outcomes. These factors, referred to as social and structural determinants of health, are shaped by historical, social, racial, gendered, political, and economic forces and help explain the relationship between environmental conditions and individualized health outcomes. This presentation discusses the digitization and racialization of the healthcare system and the importance of innovating for health and racial equity via disruptive technologies, mhealth, and patient centered platforms that help hospitals, patients, and providers, begin to bridge the gap between the social, structural, and clinical determinants of health. The goal of the presentation is to increase awareness of the broader social, racial, and gendered contexts that influence health, supports respectful, patient-centered care that incorporates lived experiences, optimizes health outcomes, improves health communications with our nation’s most vulnerable populations in an effort to eliminate and reduce health and health care inequities.