UNDERSTANDING HISTORICAL TRAUMA & THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL WISDOM

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  - Health Disparities Research, Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences
- Principal Investigator
  - AIRCH, Student Development Project
  - Partnership for NA Cancer Prevention, UA Outreach Core
  - Indians to Medicine
  - Co-Investigator, AZ PRIDE
- Consultant – AAIP/CDC cooperative agreement
  - Native American Public Health Course for Schools of Medicine
My Relations

• Great granddaughter of Forbes and Lila Manning original enrollees of the Choctaw Nation of OK
  • Granddaughter of Vera Manning Braudrick of Durant, OK
  • Daughter of Jerry Braudrick Arambula of Durant, OK
• Granddaughter of Trinidad and Rosa Arambula of Durango, MX
  • Daughter to Louis Arambula (dec) of Oklahoma City
TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW
American Indian and Alaska Native HEALTH DISPARITIES
HEALTH DISPARITY

- A particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage
- Adversely affects groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on:
  - race/ethnicity
  - religion
  - socioeconomic status
  - gender
  - mental health
  - sexual orientation or gender identity
  - age
  - cognitive, sensory, or physical disability
  - geographic location
  - other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion
# SOME DISPARITIES IN MORTALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AIAN Rate</th>
<th>US All Races Rate – 2005</th>
<th>Ratio: AIAN to US All Races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Causes</td>
<td>980.0</td>
<td>798.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol induced</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast cancer</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervical cancer</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV infection</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malignant Neoplasms</td>
<td>176.2</td>
<td>183.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age-adjusted mortality rates per 100,000 population
## INFANT MORTALITY RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2008</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate</td>
<td>Absolute difference (rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White NH</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black NH</td>
<td>13.63</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIAN</td>
<td>8.06</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
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</table>
MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES AMONG AIAN

- Serious psychological distress 1.5 times more than the general population.
- PTSD more than twice as often as the general population.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among AI/AN 10-34 year olds.
- More than one-third of Indian Health Service patient care contacts in 2006 were related to mental health or substance use disorders.
- Native Americans report alcohol and other drug use and abuse at younger ages, and at higher rates, than all other ethnic groups.
HEALTH INEQUITY AND INEQUALITY
HEALTH INEQUALITY AND INEQUITY

- Health inequalities
  - Differences in health status or in the distribution of health determinants between different population groups.

- Inequity
  - Uneven distribution that may be unnecessary and avoidable as well as unjust and unfair

- Social inequity – economic and political – is bad for our health
  - The US has, by far, the most inequality in the industrialized world
America's health care system is the least equal

Percent of patients who "did not get recommended test, treatment, or follow-up because of cost in the past year."

- Below-average income
- Above-average income

Source: The Commonwealth Fund.
Average life expectancy in the United States improved by 30 years during the 20th century.

Researchers attribute much of that increase to social reforms:

- improved wage and work standards,
- universal schooling, and
- civil rights laws.
WE ALL PAY THE PRICE FOR POOR HEALTH

- We lag behind 28 other countries in life expectancy,
- 29 other countries in infant mortality, and
- chronic illness costs businesses more than $1 trillion a year in lost productivity.
Economic hardships

Jobs are scarce on the reservations, and per capita income there is less than half of that in Pima County.

Per capita incomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>35 thousand dollars</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pima County</td>
<td>$25,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohono O’odham Nation</td>
<td>$10,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pascua Yaqui Reservation</td>
<td>$9,784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unemployment rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>30 percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pima County</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohono O’odham Nation</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pascua Yaqui Reservation</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8/08/13 SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2007-2011 five year estimates
HEALTH INEQUALITIES ARE NOT NATURAL

- Health disparities that arise from racial or class inequities result from decisions that we as a society make.
UNNATURAL CAUSES

- Acclaimed documentary series originally broadcast on PBS that examines the root causes of our alarming socio-economic and racial inequities in health.

- [http://www.unnaturalcauses.org](http://www.unnaturalcauses.org)
UNNATURAL CAUSES

“We carry our history in our bodies. ...written into our bodies is a life of experience that is shaped by social conditions and policies that will determine who will be sicker and who will die sooner.”

Nancy Krieger, Social Epidemiologist
Social Determinants of Health

“Every disease has two causes. One is pathophysiological and the other is political.”

~Ramon Cajal 1899
HEALTH IS MORE THAN HEALTH CARE

- It is…
  - the jobs we do,
  - the money we’re paid,
  - the schools we attend,
  - the neighborhoods we live in…

- As important to our health as our genes, behaviors, and even our medical care.
EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

In General
- Socioeconomic Status
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Housing
- Environmental Conditions
- Stress
- Transportation
- Social Support
- Built Environment

Native Specific
- Colonization
- Migration
- Treaty violations
- Globalization
- Self determination
- Loss of territory/land
SOCIAL GRADIENT IN HEALTH

- The relative risk of disease, mortality, and health is associated with a person’s position in the social hierarchy – their social status
  - Whitehall Studies of British Civil Servants
    - The lower the employment grade the high the risk of ill health and death.
    - Runs from the top down with poor health at each step down the social hierarchy
  - Is Universal
    - Exists between and within social classes
    - Increasing inequalities has an impact on health
    - Health inequalities affect ALL of us.
Health is tied to the distribution of resources
  - Whether measured by income, schooling, or occupation

Racism imposes an added health burden.
  - Past and present discrimination in housing, jobs, and education means that today, people of color are more likely to occupy a lower social position.
  - Social exclusion,
  - Encounters with prejudice
  - Degree of hope and optimism
  - Differential access and treatment by the health care system

All impact health
US AIRWAYS FLIGHT 1549 – HUDSON RIVER, 2009

class

first class
Our Choices are Shaped by Our Options

- Some neighborhoods have easy access to fresh, affordable produce;
- Others have only fast food joints, liquor outlets, and convenience stores.
- Some have nice homes, clean parks, safe places to walk, jog, bike or play, and well-financed schools offering gym, art, music, and after school programs,
- Others do not.
LINKING POWER AND STRESS

- Power differential and control over life
  - High Demand + Low Control = Chronic Stress
  - The lower one is on the hierarchy, the greater one’s exposure to forces that can upset life and less control to manage it.

- Chronic Stress can be deadly
  - Exposure to fear and uncertainty trigger a stress response
  - Constant and unrelenting threats change physiological systems that do not return to normal
3 CARD ACTIVITY
HISTORICAL TRAUMA
HISTORICAL TRAUMA: LINKING HEALTH DISPARITIES AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Historical Trauma

A constellation of characteristics associated with cumulative group trauma across generations. Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1998:290).

Work on historical trauma examines the relationship of health and disease outcomes to the individual, community and intergenerational effects of the events of colonization, environmental degradation, genocide, forced assimilation, and relocation.
HISTORICAL TRAUMA

- Many patients suffer not one but multiple traumas: physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect
- Multi-generational trauma: parent’s/grandparent’s history and how it is passed down
- Urban AIAN women may have higher rates of trauma: 65% of AIAN women in NYC experienced some kind of interpersonal violence.
  - 28% reported childhood physical abuse
  - 48% reported rape
  - 40% reported domestic violence
- “When people have been traumatized, they pass it one” Dr. Ann Bullock
A CASE FOR HISTORICAL TRAUMA

http://www.ted.com/talks/aaron_huey
ACCORDING TO AARON HUEY VIDEO ON PINE RIDGE

- Unemployment is between 85-90%
- Many are homeless or living in homes with up to 5 other families
- At least 60% of homes are infested with black mold
- 39% of homes have no electricity
- More than 90% of the population live below the federal poverty line
- School drop out rate is up to 70%
- Teacher turnover is 8 times the U.S. national average
The infant mortality rate is the highest on this continent and is 3 times higher than the U.S. national average.

Cervical cancer is 5 times higher than the U.S. national average.

The tuberculosis rate is approximately 8 times higher than the U.S. national average.

Half of the population over 40 years of age has diabetes.

Life expectancy for men is 46-48 years - the same as Afghanistan and Somalia.
CULTURE AS CURE
COMMON VALUES AND PRINCIPLES HELD BY NATIVE NATIONS

- Collective benefit
- Humility
- Relationships
- Respect
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Cooperation/Partnership
- Trust
- Harmony and Balance
MEDICINE WHEEL OR DSM-5

Diagram showing the Medicine Wheel with sections for Environment, Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, and Creator.
**BALANCE AND HARMONY**

- The individual:
  - is a part of the dynamic whole
  - must respect the whole as to not disrupt or destroy the various systems
  - keep them in balance while they evolve and change

- Therefore health is a system that is interwoven among the numerous systems and as such is dependent upon larger systems such as the family, community, and the environment.

- Disease and illness are understood to be imbalances in the system.

- Treatments are then attempts to restore balance.
RESPECT

- In order for healing (treatment) the individual must respect her/himself and her/his position within the larger whole.
- This respect is the foundation should direct and guide efforts to improve health by striving to restore balance.
- Culture dictates the language used to:
  - Define issues
  - Identify problems
  - Frame problems
  - Determine the manner in which solutions are sought
  - Define and measure success
COMMUNICATION WITH AIAN CLIENTS

▶ DO NOT ASSUME! Not all Natives are the same
   ▶ (564 tribes, urban v. reservation etc.)
▶ Greeting Before this Course:
   ▶ Why are you here? (Response: Can lead to an existential conversation or could be an insult as if they don’t belong.)

▶ What brings you to the clinic? (Response: My car, my son, the bus….)
▶ New and Improved Greeting
   ▶ How may I help you?
   ▶ What can I do for you?
▶ A Storytelling culture
   ▶ LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN
   ▶ TRY NOT TO INTERRUPT
COMMUNICATION WITH AIAN CLIENTS

- Slow down
- Words are Power
- Avoid negative wording
- Avoid foul language
- Avoid ‘NAMING CEREMONIES’
  - YOU ARE A DIABETIC VS. YOU HAVE DIABETES
  - YOU ARE AN ADDICT VS. YOU ARE ADDICTED TO
EXAMPLES

Youth Suicide Depression Screen

#10 Have you been thinking that things would be better off if you were dead?

#12 If you’ve thought about ending your life, do you know how you would do it?

Geriatric Depression Screen

#12 Do you feel pretty worthless the way you are now?

BECK Depression Scale

#14 I don’t feel that I look any worse than I used to.
I believe I look ugly.
USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE

- You have survived some rough times
- You will feel so much better when you eat more like your ancestors and continue your workouts.
- Let’s work together to help you feel better.
Thank You
REFERENCES

- Source: SAMHSA, HHS. National Survey on Drug Use and Health: 2002-2004
- www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/2k6results.cfm#Ch3
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