

Systemic Racism/Sexism and Other Inequities of Past and Present, a Public Health Problem Requiring Medical Student and Physician Education

3-9-21



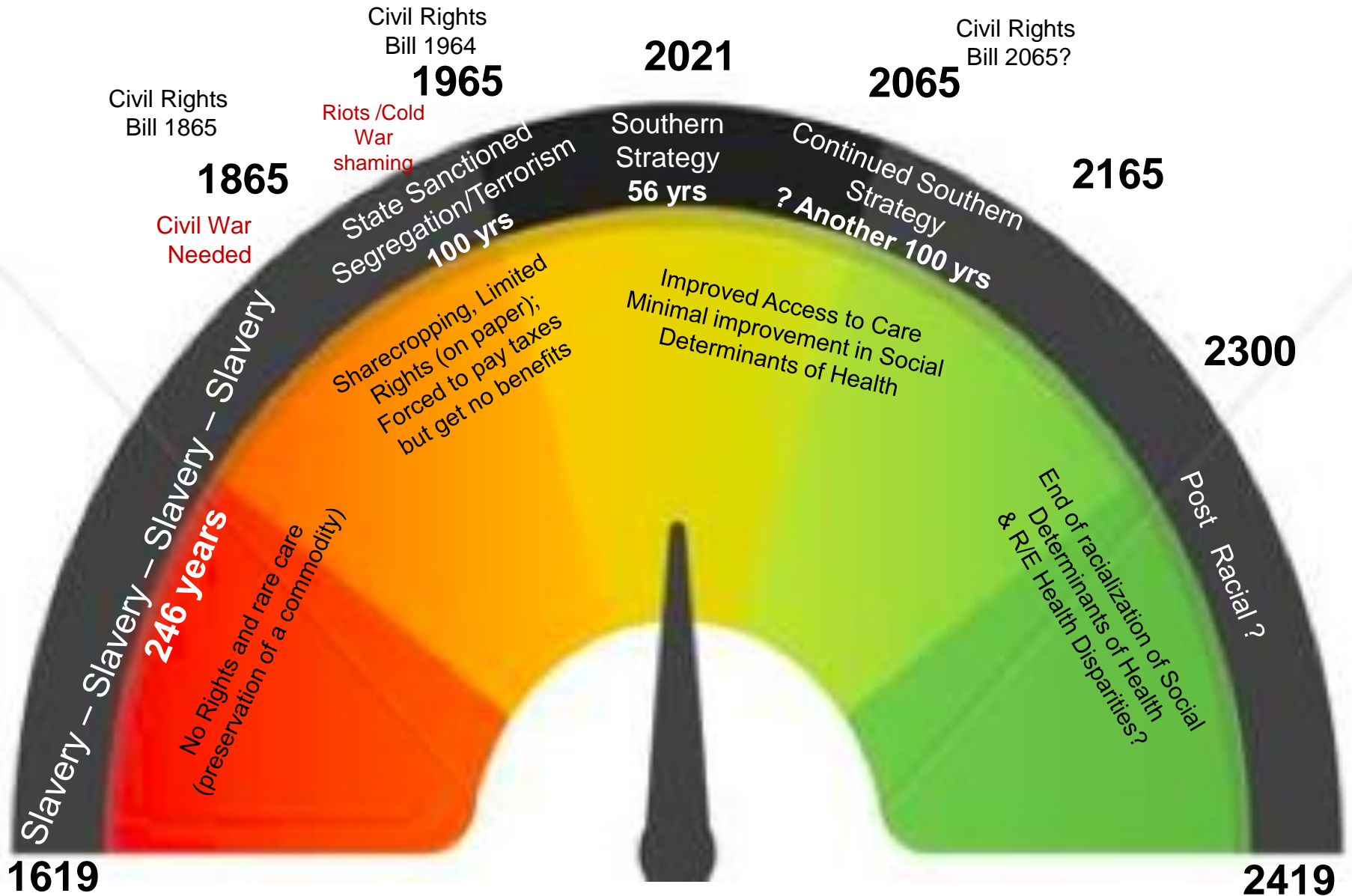
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Building.Belonging.Becoming.

Race, Racism and Medicine Timeline: The First 400 years (1619-2019)



Southern Strategy: Post civil rights continuation of “Jim Crow” policies and practices

- **Race** – social interpretation of how one looks in a “race”-conscious society
- A socio-political construct to control power based on how people look (race) and then expanded to marginalize other people (ethnicity - culture/language)
 - *Derived from White Supremacy ideology of racial superiority as central in the founding of America and all its structures and systems (to justify and maintain chattel slavery & Native American genocide/oppression)*
 - Race is **indirectly** (not directly) related to ancestry
 - **As a research variable: poor indicator of biology and strong indicator of exposure to racism**

Race = How society sees you and thinks of you



- **Racism:** a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call "race")
 - Racism by design 1) unfairly disadvantages some individuals/communities, 2) unfairly advantages other individuals/communities, and 3) saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources.
 - *Structural or Institutionalized racism; personally mediated, internalized*
 - *For individuals - focus on racist actions not labeling the person*

Racism = How society treats you based on your race



Structural Racism & Health Inequities

- Despite growing interest in the social determinants of health, many academics, policy makers, scientists, elected officials, journalists, and others responsible for defining and responding to the public discourse remain **reluctant** to identify racism as a root cause of racial health inequities.
- Structural Racism: totality of ways in which societies foster racial discrimination through mutually reinforcing systems of housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, criminal justice, etc.

These patterns and practices reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources.



The Makings of a Disparity: COVID-19

Structural Racism*

(e.g. residential segregation, underfunded school systems, poverty, chronic discrimination)

Increase
Risk of
Exposure

Service Jobs

Poor housing
conditions

Public
Transportation

High Chronic
Disease
Burden

DM/CKD

HTN/CVD

Asthma/COPD

Lack of
Access to
Quality Care

Early testing
shortage

Poor
preventative
care

Low quality
hospitals



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**Every system is perfectly designed to achieve
the results it gets - Don Berwick**

No Physician is racist, so how can there be structural racism in health care?

- Many physicians are skeptical of structural racism, that economic, educational and other social systems preferentially disadvantage Black Americans and other communities of color

JAMA 3-4-21: Podcast with Mitch Katz

How can there be structural racism in America when the 1964 Civil Rights Bill put an end to federally supported racism?

Short answer – that is not what the civil rights bill did. That is a narrative to promote racism



CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

- To enforce the constitutional right to vote,
- Confer jurisdiction upon the US district courts of to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations,
- Authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities & public education,
- Extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs,
- Establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes.

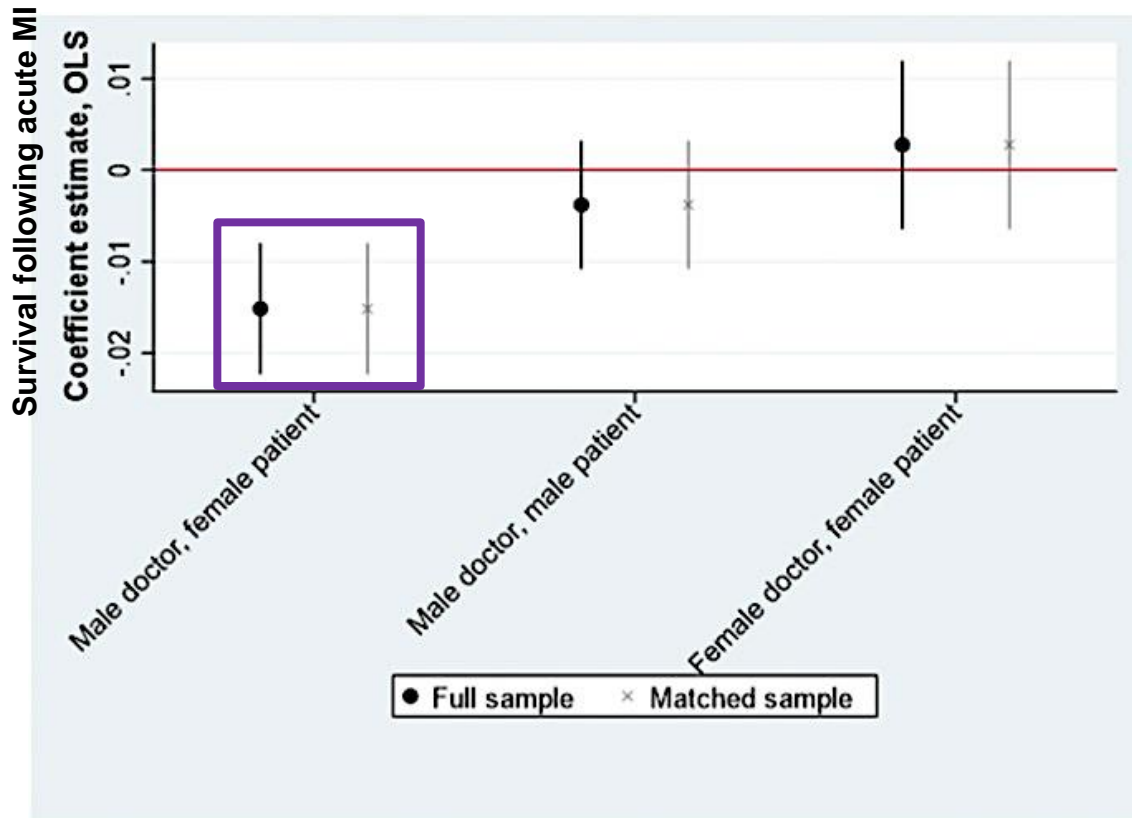


A few examples of race based social system inequities

- Education (K-12 Public) – on average a Black School district gets \$2200/student/yr less than a White School district. A low-income White School district gets >\$1400/student/yr more than low-income Black School district .
 - <https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion>
- Criminal Justice
 - Possessing one gram of rock crack (more commonly used in Black Community) receives a 100x longer sentence than someone possessing one gram of powder cocaine (more commonly used in White Community)
- Employment
 - With similar resumes (1 difference) a young White job applicant was 50% more likely to get a call back than Black or Hispanic peers, despite having a felony cocaine conviction listed on their resume
- Housing: Disparate treatment of home buyers
 - 2019 - 19% of cases for Asian testers, 39% for Hispanic testers, 49% for Black testers
 - Newsday: Long Island Divided – 3 yr probe on housing discrimination. Nov. 17, 2019
 - 2021 – Black San Fran Family house was appraised for \$970,000 Reappraisal using White friend as owner - \$1.4M



Patient-physician gender concordance and increased mortality among female heart attack patients



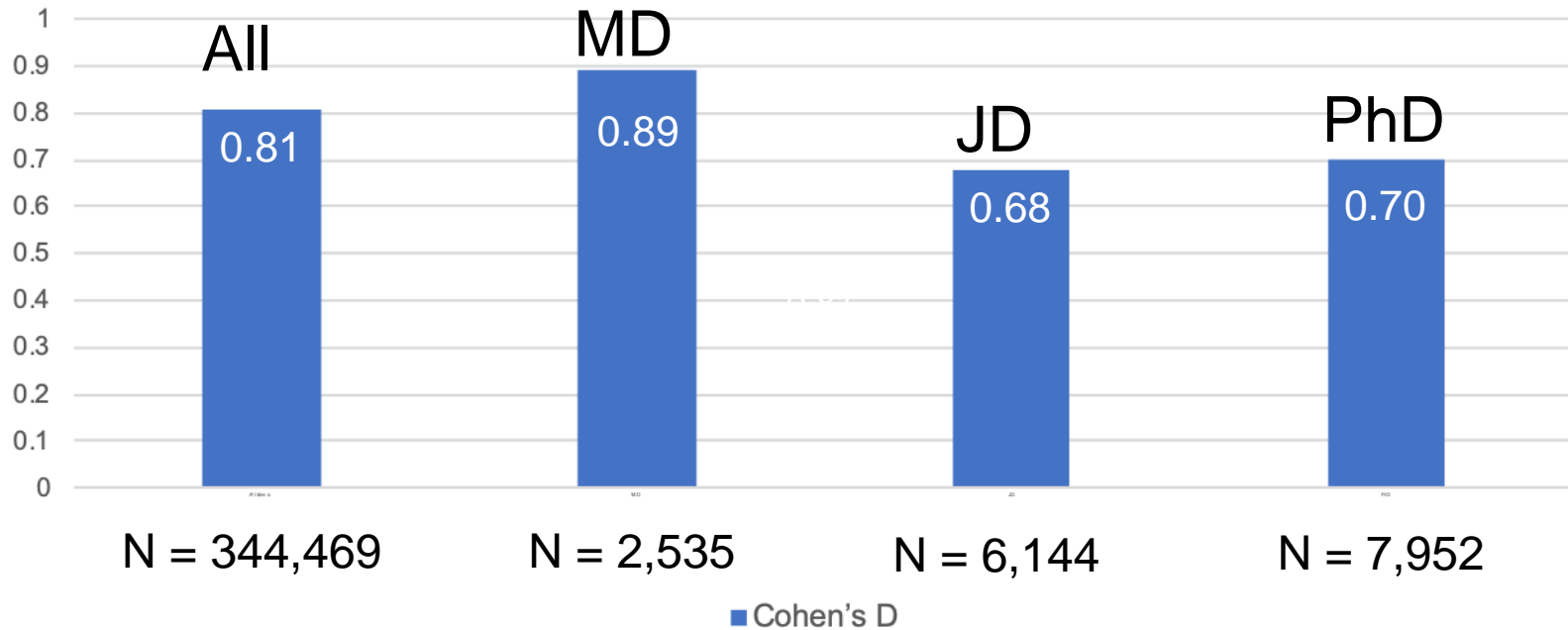
Gender concordance and patient survival: 90% confidence interval displayed. Estimates include controls and hospital quarter fixed effects.

Comparison group is male doctor, male patient.

$n = 581,797$ for full sample,
 $n = 134,420$ for matched sample



Race Implicit Association Test (IAT) Doctors, Researchers and Lawyers



D of 0.5 = medium effect
D of 0.8 = large effect

Cohen's D: standardized effect size, comparing the mean to M=0 (no bias),
D of 0.2 = small effect, D of 0.5 = medium effect, and D of 0.8 = large effect
Data from *Project Implicit*®, operated at Harvard University (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/>)



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Sabin J, et al. Physicians' implicit and explicit attitudes about race by MD race, ethnicity, and gender. *J Health Care Poor Underserved*. 2009;20(3):896-913.

Towards Achieving Equity



Social Determinants of Health

1. **EQUALITY** imagines an equal world.
"I care about all students equally"



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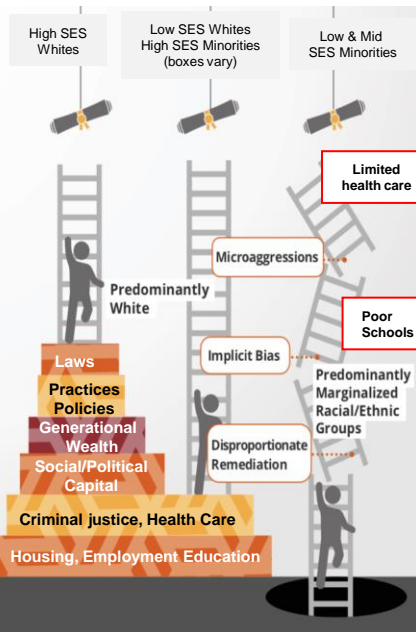


2. But the world **ISN'T EQUAL.**



Adapted from the USC Center for Urban Education

3. And it has **BIAS AND SYSTEMIC RACISM.**



4. Within this same picture, a **DIVERSITY** lens focuses only on bringing more students into an unequal pathway.



5. In contrast, **EQUITY** redirects resources to the pathways with greatest need to fix barriers and intentionally provide support.

& **Justice** closes the hole and starts adding some boxes



National Structural Racism Scorecard For Treating a Sick Nation

Equity & Anti-racism mindset

1. Policing reform
2. Education inequities
3. Wealth inequities (employment, credit, etc.)
4. Lifetime judges with a history of lens of equity & justice vs. racism/sexism
5. Case law with a lens of equity & justice vs. racism/sexism
6. Campaign finance/Lobbying reform
- 7. And more**



The Way Forward: Society

- Don't be afraid of bias
- Everyone can work to minimize bias
- Don't be afraid of the name Structural Racism. No one on this zoom owned an enslaved Black person or created structural racism
 - Structural racism - **mutually reinforcing systems** of housing, education, employment, earnings/benefits, credit, media, health care, criminal justice, etc.
- However, everyone can either continue to support structural racism (actively or by doing nothing) or **to help to dismantle it.**

