

Impact of Cultural Trauma on Health Disparities

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Introduction

Health disparities disproportionately affect many minority groups, contributing to inequities in healthcare outcomes. Cultural trauma, rooted in historical and ongoing experiences of marginalized communities, plays a significant role in shaping health disparities. This article delves into the intricate relationship between cultural trauma and health disparities, exploring how fundamental causes contribute to disparities by reducing access to health resources. Furthermore, it highlights the impact of cultural trauma on diminishing key cultural and health resources, ultimately perpetuating health inequities. By recognizing the multifaceted dynamics at play, we can pave the way for research and interventions aimed at addressing these disparities.

Description

Cultural trauma refers to the collective psychological and emotional distress experienced by marginalized communities as a result of historical, intergenerational, and ongoing societal injustices. This trauma affects not only individuals but also entire communities, influencing their cultural identity, sense of belonging, and well-being. Unfortunately, cultural trauma contributes significantly to health disparities, as it intersects with various social determinants of health, including socioeconomic status, education, employment opportunities, and access to quality healthcare. Fundamental causes are overarching social determinants that give rise to health disparities. These causes include structural factors, such as socioeconomic status, discrimination, and unequal distribution of resources.

Cultural trauma exacerbates health disparities by functioning as a fundamental cause, leading to reduced access to health resources among marginalized communities. As a result, individuals and communities impacted by cultural trauma face barriers to healthcare services, health education, preventive care, and culturally responsive care, perpetuating health inequities. Cultural trauma not only limits access to health resources but also diminishes key cultural and health assets within minority communities. Historical injustices, discrimination, and systemic oppression undermine the cultural strengths, traditions, and knowledge that serve as protective factors for well-being. Moreover, cultural trauma erodes trust in healthcare systems, impacting healthcare-seeking behaviors and reducing the utilization of appropriate care. These diminished cultural and health resources further contribute to health disparities and exacerbate existing inequities.

Research evidence increasingly highlights the intersection of cultural trauma and health disparities. Studies have revealed the profound and lasting effects of cultural trauma on mental health, physical health outcomes, and healthcare utilization among minority populations. Recognizing cultural trauma as a fundamental cause of health disparities provides a lens through which researchers, policymakers, and healthcare providers can better understand

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and address the root causes of inequities. It also highlights the need for culturally sensitive interventions, trauma-informed care, and community-led initiatives to promote healing and resilience within affected communities. Acknowledging cultural trauma's role in perpetuating health disparities opens up new research pathways and opportunities for intervention.

By examining the mechanisms through which cultural trauma impacts health outcomes, researchers can develop evidence-based strategies to mitigate its effects and promote health equity. This includes fostering culturally responsive healthcare systems, addressing structural inequities, amplifying community voices, and promoting community-led healing and empowerment initiatives. Collaborative efforts among researchers, communities, and policymakers are crucial to drive meaningful change and reduce health disparities stemming from cultural trauma. The intersection of cultural trauma and health disparities sheds light on the profound impact of historical and ongoing injustices on marginalized communities' health and well-being.

By recognizing cultural trauma as a fundamental cause of health disparities and understanding its consequences on diminished cultural and health resources, we can work towards dismantling inequities and promoting health equity. Through rigorous research, culturally responsive interventions, and collaborative partnerships, we have the opportunity to address the root causes of health disparities and support healing, resilience, and justice within affected communities. Cultural trauma, stemming from historical and ongoing experiences of marginalized communities, has significant implications for health disparities. Emerging research evidence suggests that cultural trauma meets all fundamental cause criteria, serving as a powerful determinant in perpetuating health inequities. Recognizing the role of cultural trauma in shaping disparities not only deepens our understanding of the underlying mechanisms but also paves the way for new research pathways aimed at addressing these inequities.

This article explores the evidence supporting cultural trauma as a fundamental cause and the potential impact of recognizing its role in disparities on driving innovative research agendas. Fundamental causes are overarching social determinants that contribute to the persistence of health disparities. Cultural trauma aligns with these fundamental cause criteria, as it influences multiple aspects of individuals' lives and communities' well-being. Cultural trauma operates through various mechanisms, including socioeconomic factors, discrimination, access to resources, and psychological distress, all of which significantly impact health outcomes. By recognizing cultural trauma as a fundamental cause, we acknowledge its pervasive influence on health disparities and its potential to exacerbate existing inequities.

Research findings increasingly demonstrate the association between cultural trauma and health disparities. Studies have examined the intergenerational transmission of trauma, the impact of historical injustices on mental and physical health outcomes, and the enduring effects of discrimination and systemic oppression on marginalized communities. This growing body of evidence highlights the complex ways in which cultural trauma shapes disparities and underscores the need for targeted interventions and policy changes to address these underlying causes. Recognizing the role of cultural trauma in perpetuating disparities has several important implications.

Firstly, it deepens our understanding of the mechanisms through which disparities arise, shedding light on the complex interplay of historical, social, and psychological factors. Secondly, it highlights the need to incorporate cultural trauma into conceptual frameworks and research methodologies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of disparities. Finally, acknowledging cultural trauma's fundamental cause status opens new avenues of research, enabling investigators to explore innovative interventions and policies that

address the underlying trauma and its impact on health outcomes. Recognizing the role of cultural trauma in disparities creates opportunities for new research pathways. Researchers can investigate the mechanisms through which cultural trauma influences health disparities, exploring pathways such as psychological distress, intergenerational trauma transmission, cultural erosion, and healthcare mistrust.

Research can focus on developing culturally sensitive interventions, trauma-informed care approaches, and community-led healing initiatives that address the specific needs of affected populations. By embracing cultural trauma as a research priority, investigators can contribute to more nuanced understandings of disparities and drive evidence-based interventions to promote health equity. Addressing cultural trauma and its impact on disparities requires collaborative efforts among researchers, policymakers, communities, and healthcare providers. Cross-disciplinary collaborations can foster a holistic approach to understanding and addressing the complex interplay between cultural trauma and health disparities. Policy implications arising from this recognition may include trauma-informed healthcare policies, cultural competency training for healthcare providers, and community-led initiatives to heal and build resilience [1-5].

Conclusion

Recognizing cultural trauma's role also reinforces the importance of centering the experiences and voices of affected communities in shaping research and policy agendas. Research evidence supports the notion that cultural trauma meets all fundamental cause criteria, highlighting its significant influence on health disparities. By recognizing cultural trauma's role, we expand our understanding of the underlying mechanisms and open new research pathways aimed at addressing these inequities. Embracing cultural

trauma as a research priority has the potential to drive innovative interventions, shape policies, and foster collaboration among various stakeholders. Through these concerted efforts, we can strive to mitigate the impact of cultural trauma on disparities, promote healing and resilience, and work towards achieving health equity for all communities affected by cultural trauma.

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