

Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?

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Patterns of America's Health

What are the Problems?

We Are Not the Healthiest

- U.S. ranks near the bottom of industrialized countries on health, and we are losing ground
 - 1980 = 11th on Life Expectancy
 - 2014 = 35th on Life Expectancy
 - U.S. Ranked behind South Korea, Greece, Cyprus, Cuba and Lebanon
 - And it is not just the minorities doing badly!
 - In 2014, White America would be = 34th
 - In 2014, Black America would be 96th
-

A Larger Context for Disparities

There are large racial, socioeconomic, and geographic disparities in health but they should be understood within the context of the larger national disparity

All Americans are far less healthy than we could, and should be

**Socioeconomic Status (SES) is a
central determinant of the
distribution of valuable
resources in society**

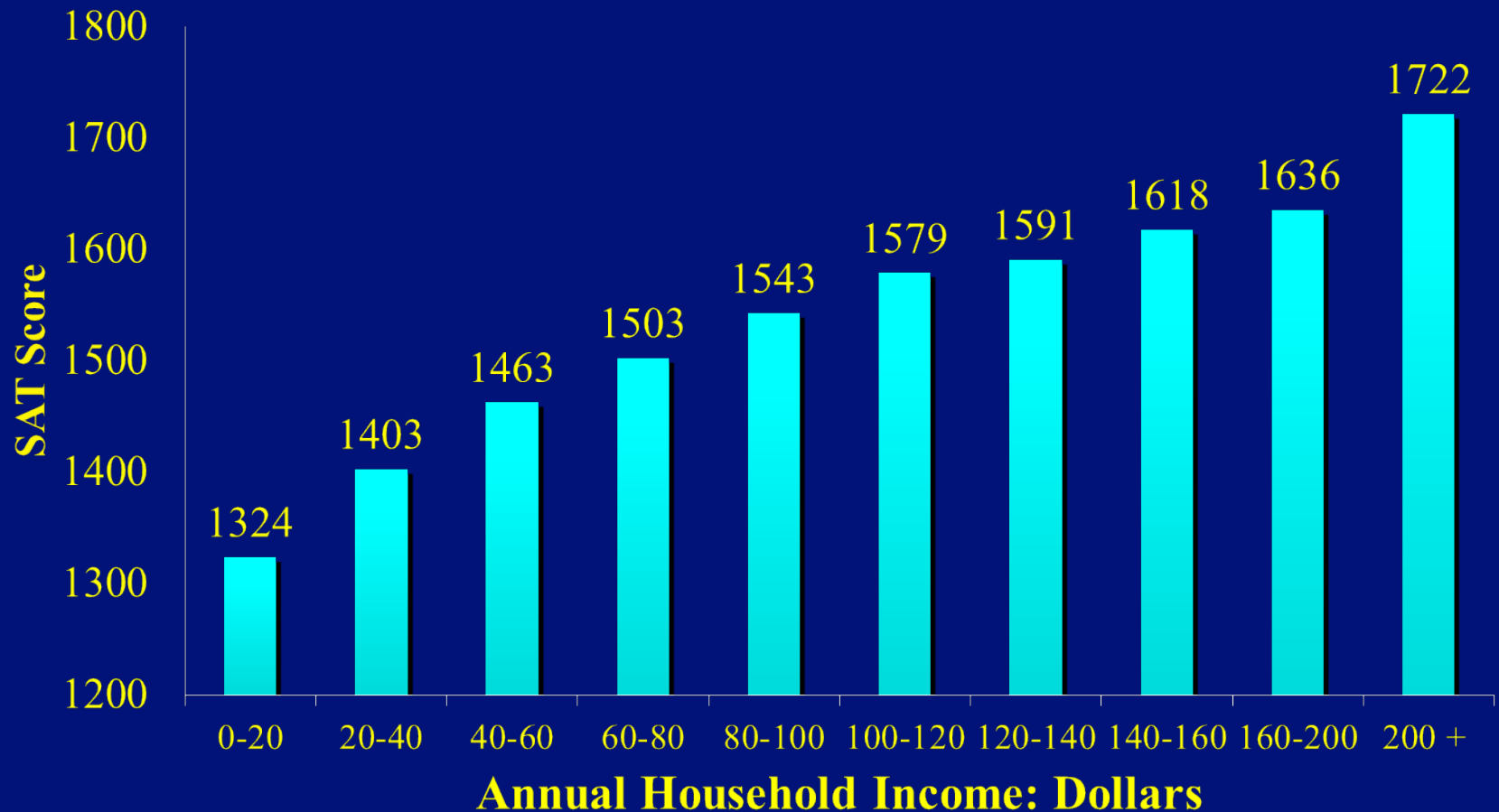
SAT = Scholastic Aptitude Test

OR

Student Affluence Test?

SAT SCORE by Family Income

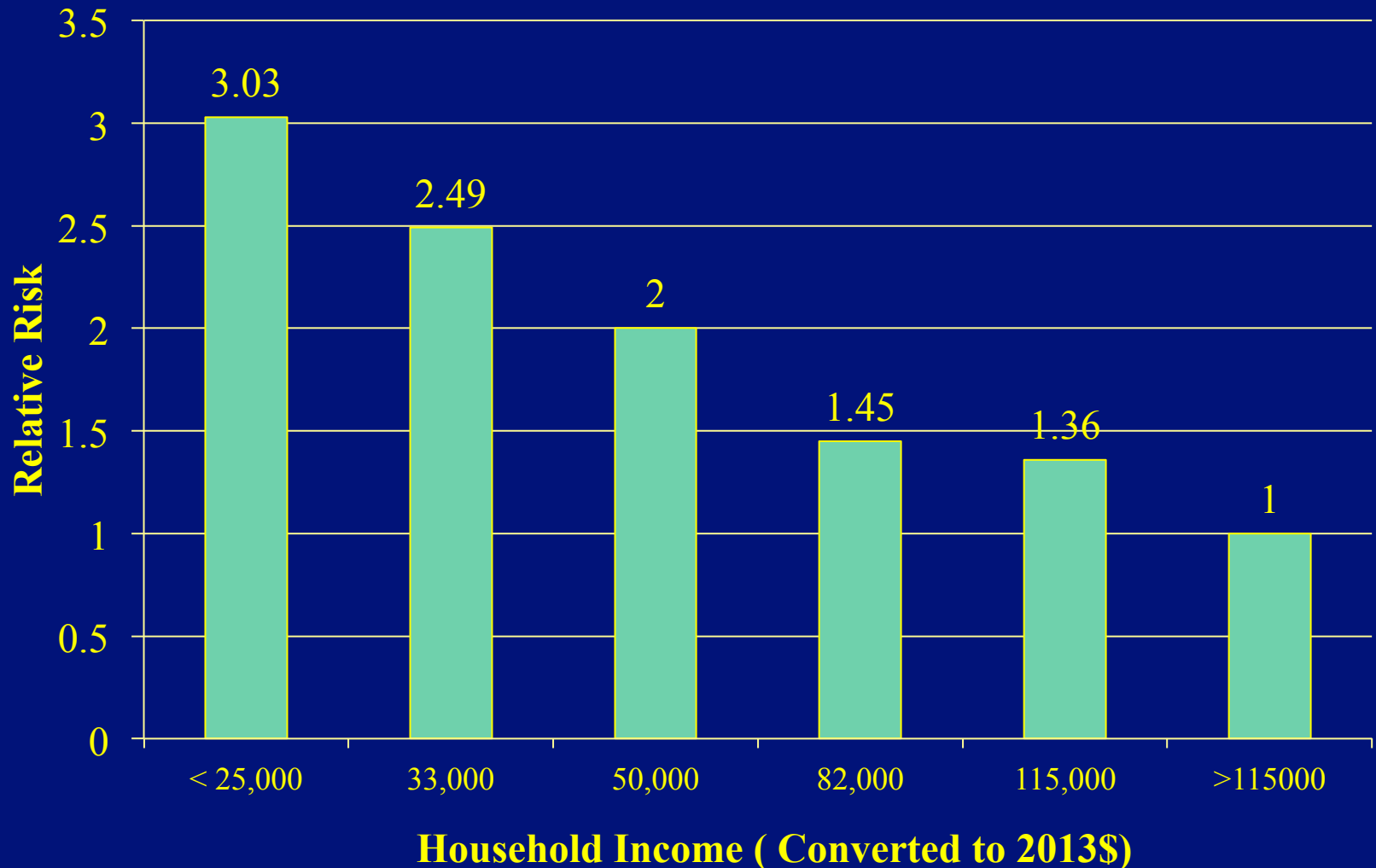
SAT Score (Math, Reading & Writing)



Patterns of America's Health

There are Large Socioeconomic
Inequities in Health in the U.S.

Relative Risks of All-Cause Mortality by Household Income Level: U.S. Panel Study of Income Dynamics

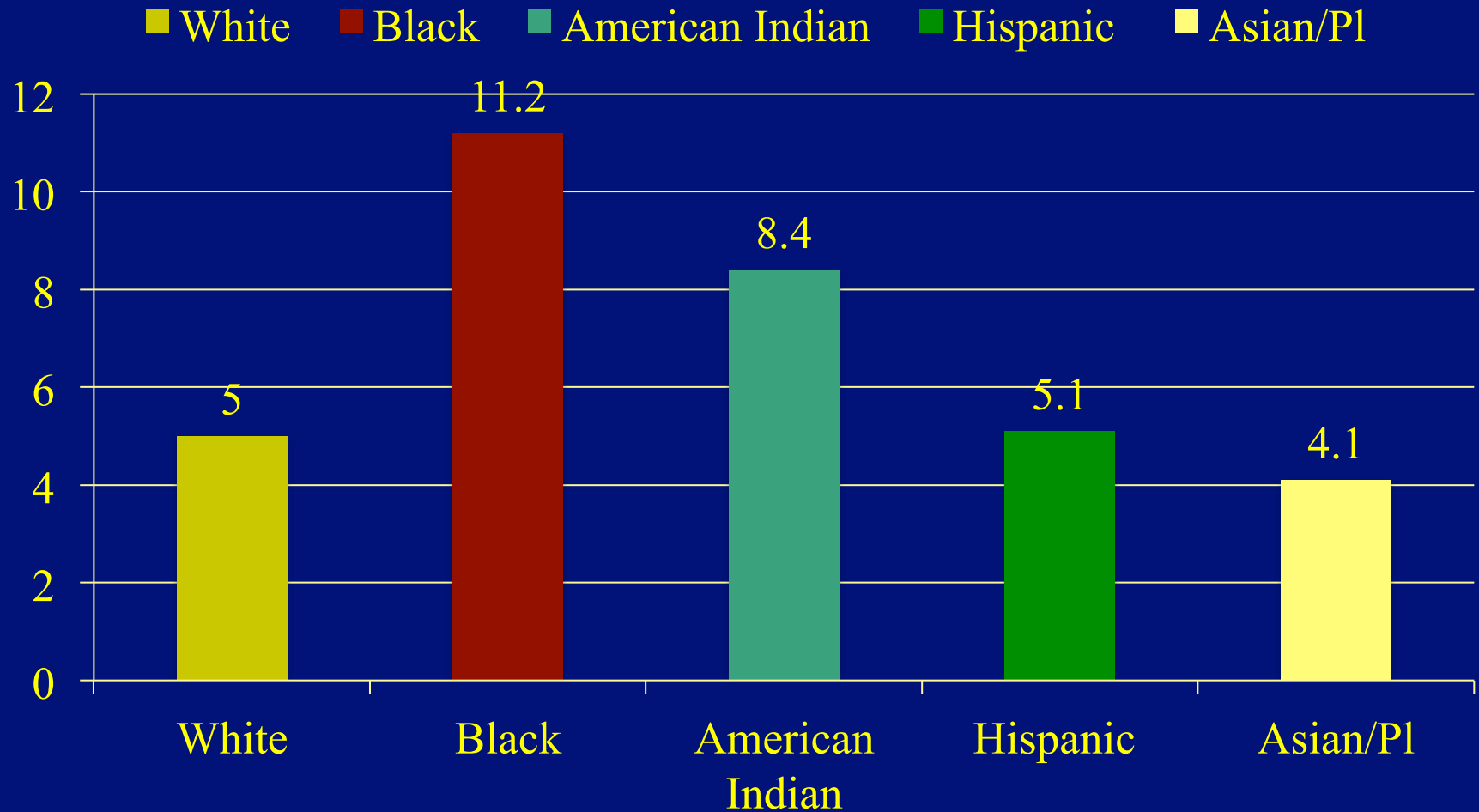


There are Large Racial Inequities
in SES in the U.S.

Patterns of America's Health

There are Large Racial Inequities
in Health in the U.S.

Infant Mortality in the U.S., 2012



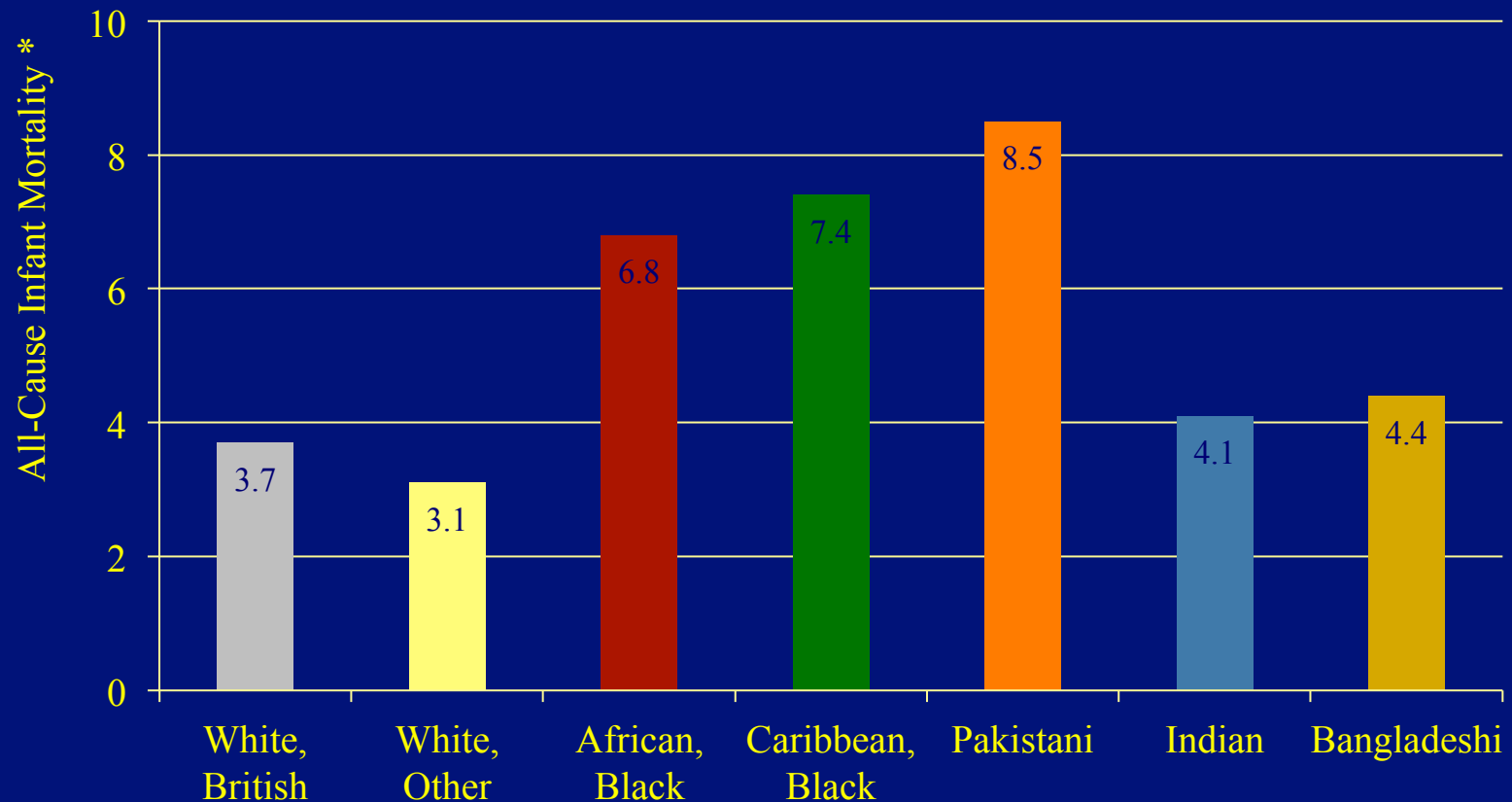
A Global Phenomenon

In race-conscious societies, such as,

- Australia
- Brazil
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- the U.K.
- Canada
- United States,

non-dominant racial groups have worse health than the dominant racial group

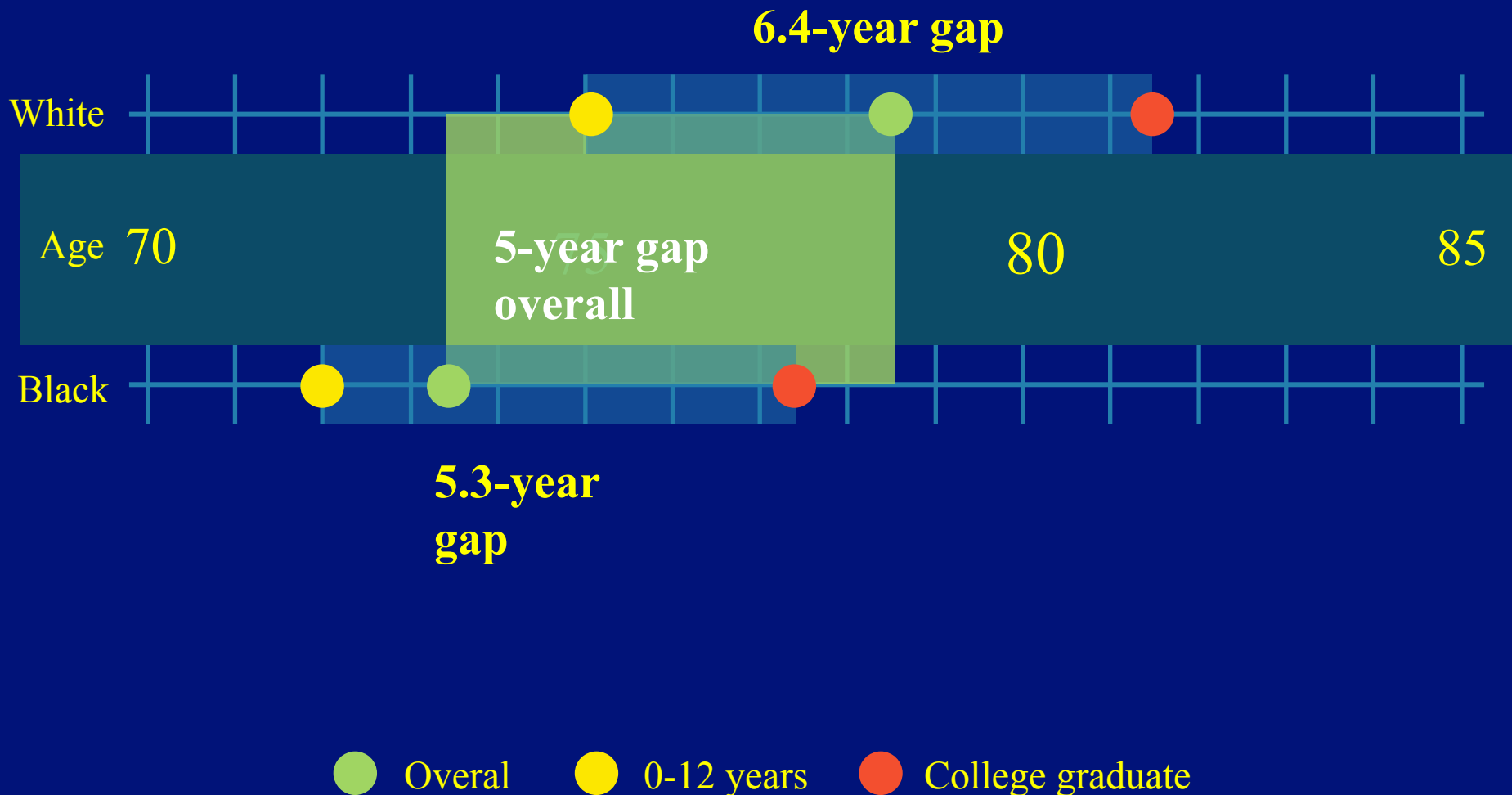
Infant Mortality by Ethnicity in England and Wales, 2011



* Deaths per 1,000 live births, known gestational age

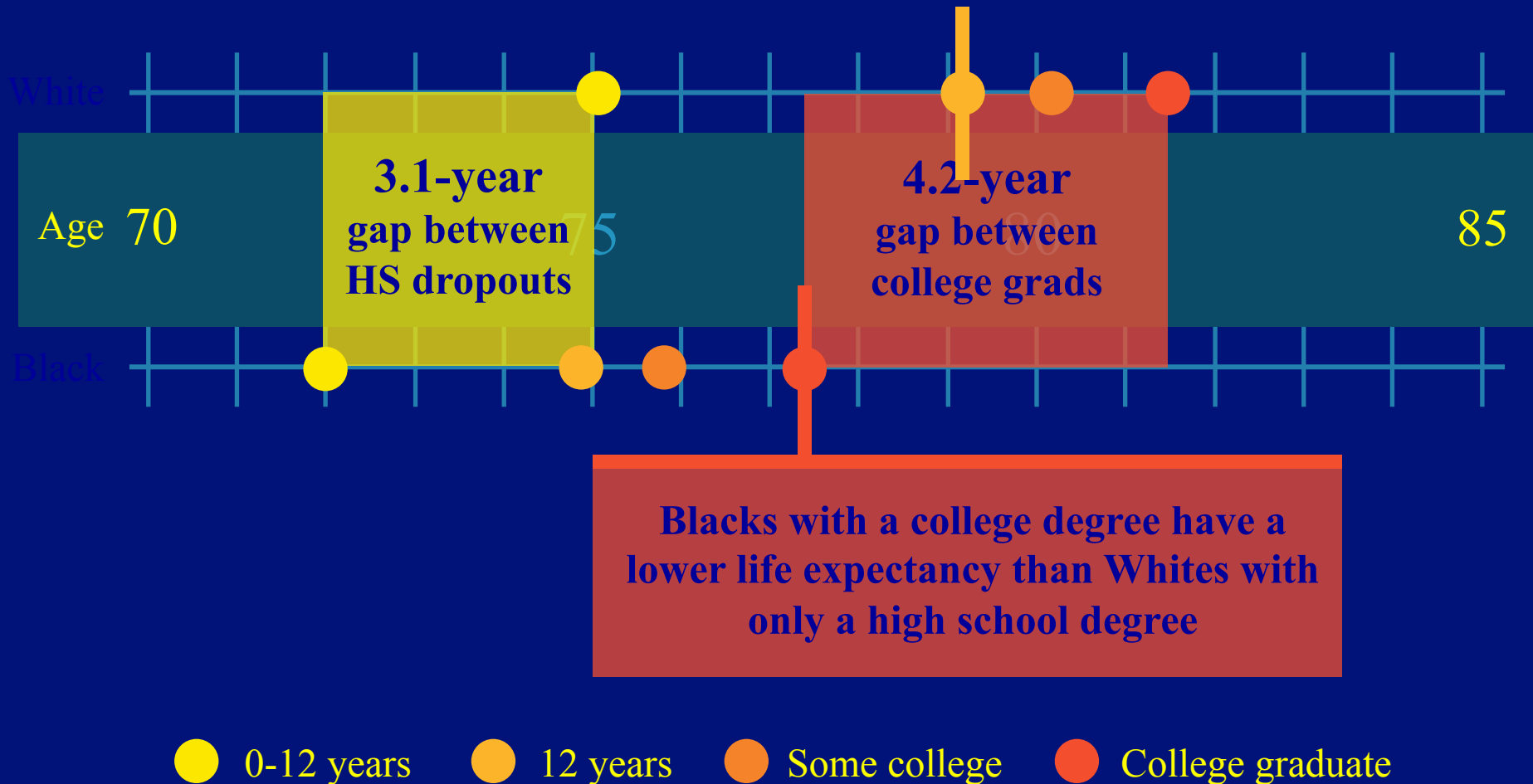
Added Burden of Race

Life Expectancy at Age 25 Based on Level of Education



Life Expectancy at Age 25

Race Still Matters



Why Does Race Still Matter?

Could racism be a critical missing piece of the puzzle to understand the patterning of racial disparities in health?

The House that Racism Built

Racism

- **Ideology of inferiority**
- **Institutional**
- **Cultural**



Social Forces

- **Political**
- **Legal**
- **Economic**
- **Religious**
- **Cultural**
- **Historical Events**

Racism Defined

- Racism: an organized system, premised on the categorization and ranking of social groups into races and devalues, disempowers and differentially allocates desirable societal opportunities and resources to racial groups regarded as inferior
- The development of racism is typically undergirded by an ideology of inferiority in which some population groups are regarded as being inferior to others.
- This leads to the development of negative attitudes and beliefs toward racial out-groups (prejudice and stereotypes), and differential treatment of these groups by individuals and social institutions (discrimination)

*Individual vs Institutional
Discrimination*

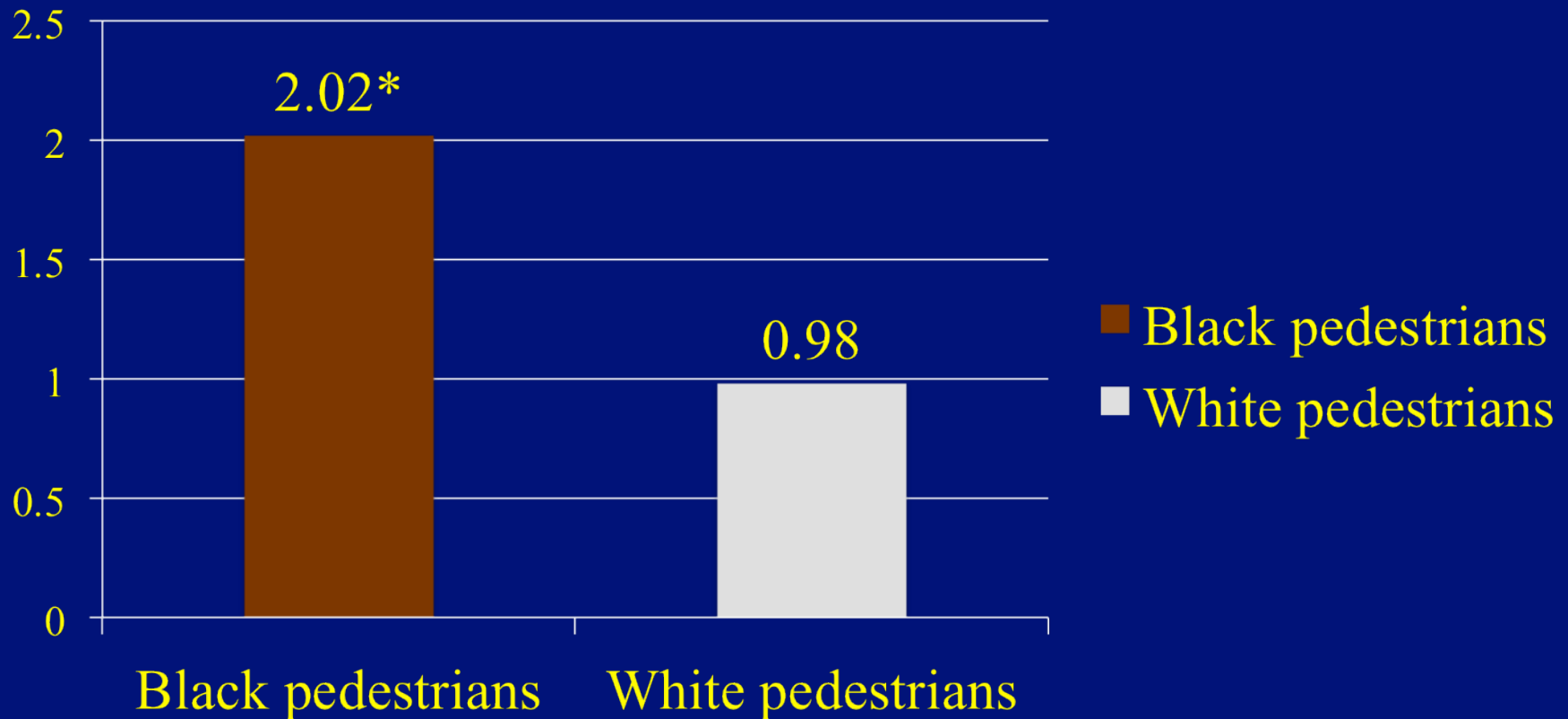
Individual Bias: *Waiting at Crosswalks*

- 3 Black and 3 White males, in Portland, OR
- Males in their 20s, wearing identical clothing
- Male indicates intention to cross



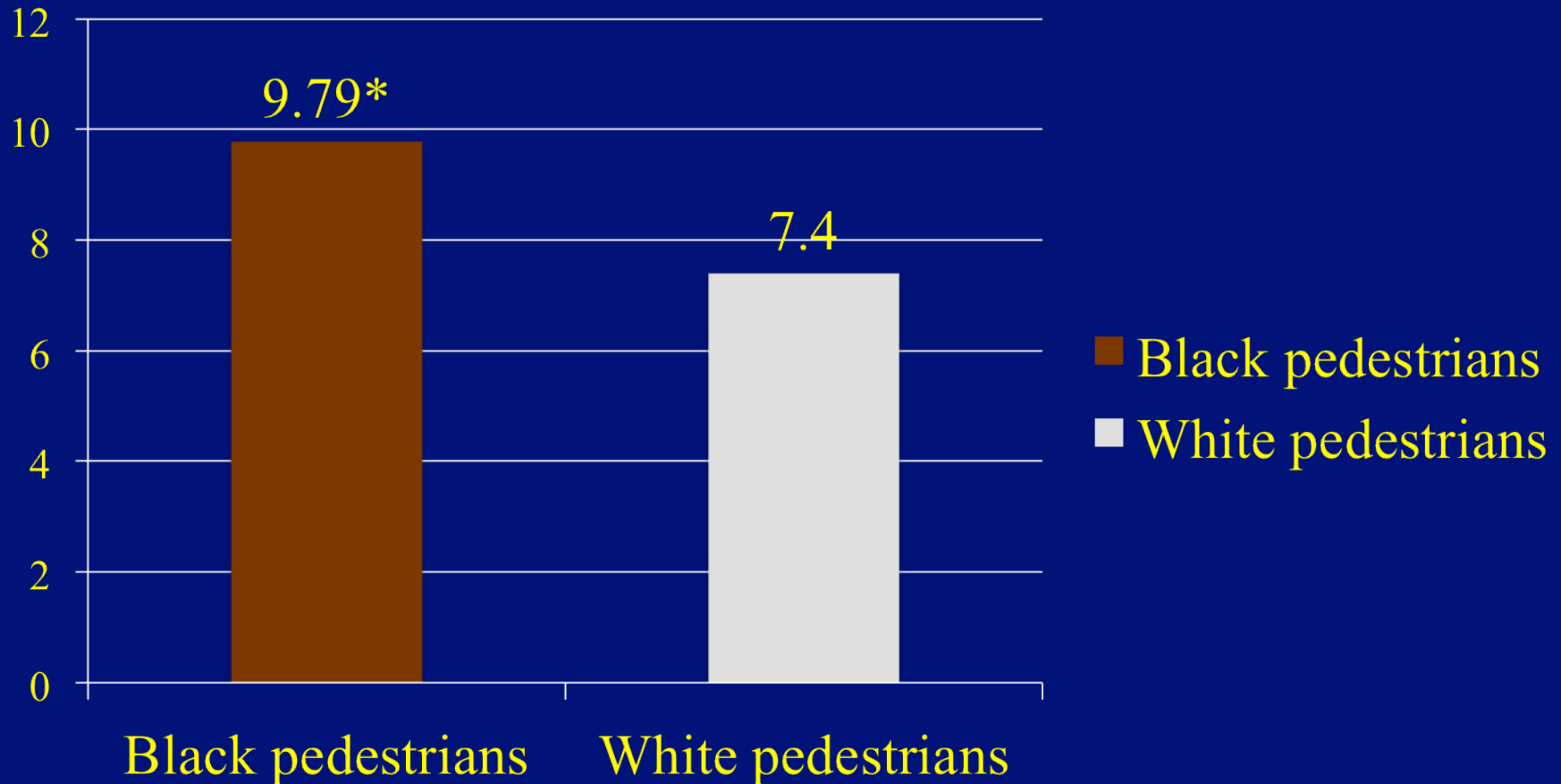
Multiple Cars Twice as likely to Pass Blacks

Average Number of Cars that Passed Without Stopping



Blacks Wait 32% Longer to Cross the Street

Second elapsed until driver yield



Institutional Discrimination is Pervasive

Institutional Discrimination: Waiting to Vote

Average number of minutes, 2012 Presidential Election

African Americans  23 min

Latinos  19 min

Asian Americans  15 min

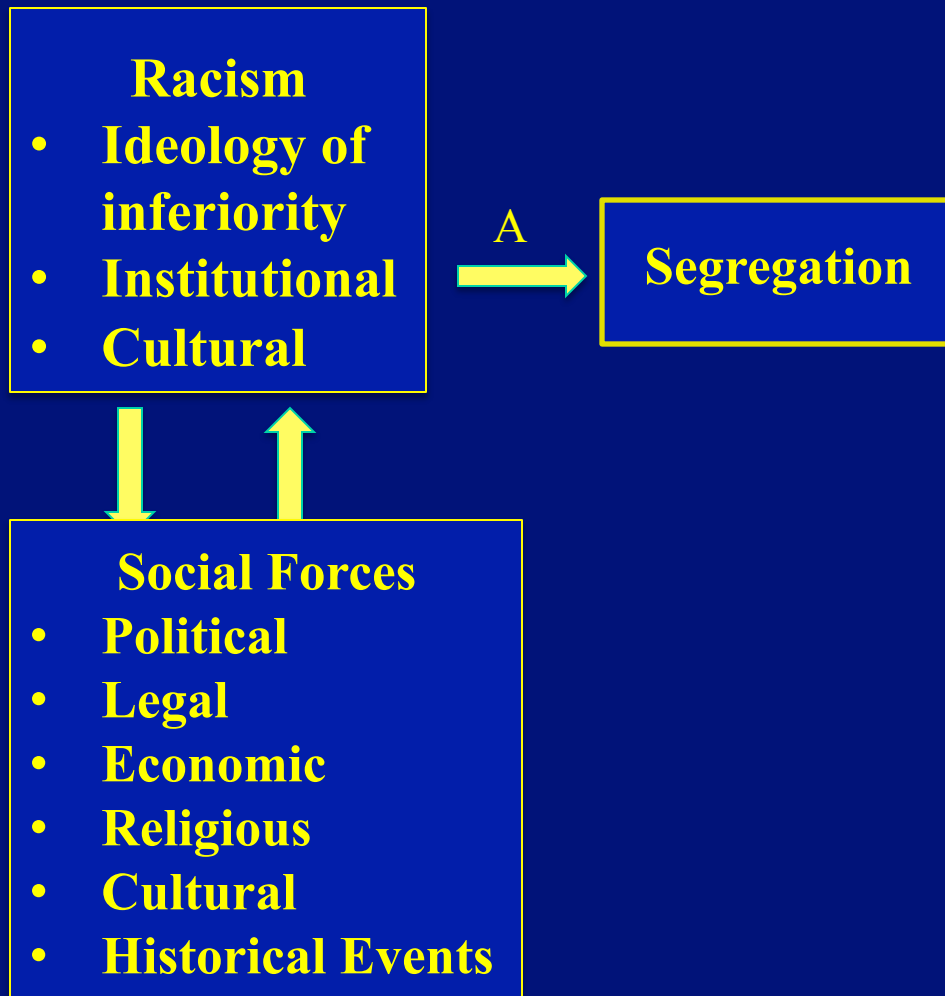
Native Americans  13 min

Whites  12 min

Institutional Processes

- Length of time waiting to vote linked to the residence of the voter and the policies and procedures (budgeting and space constraints and local administrative procedures) linked to place:
 - How many voters being served by a polling site?
 - How many precincts in a given area?
 - Staffing of a precinct affects how long it takes to vote
-

The House that Racism Built



Place Matters

Residential Segregation is
a striking legacy of racism



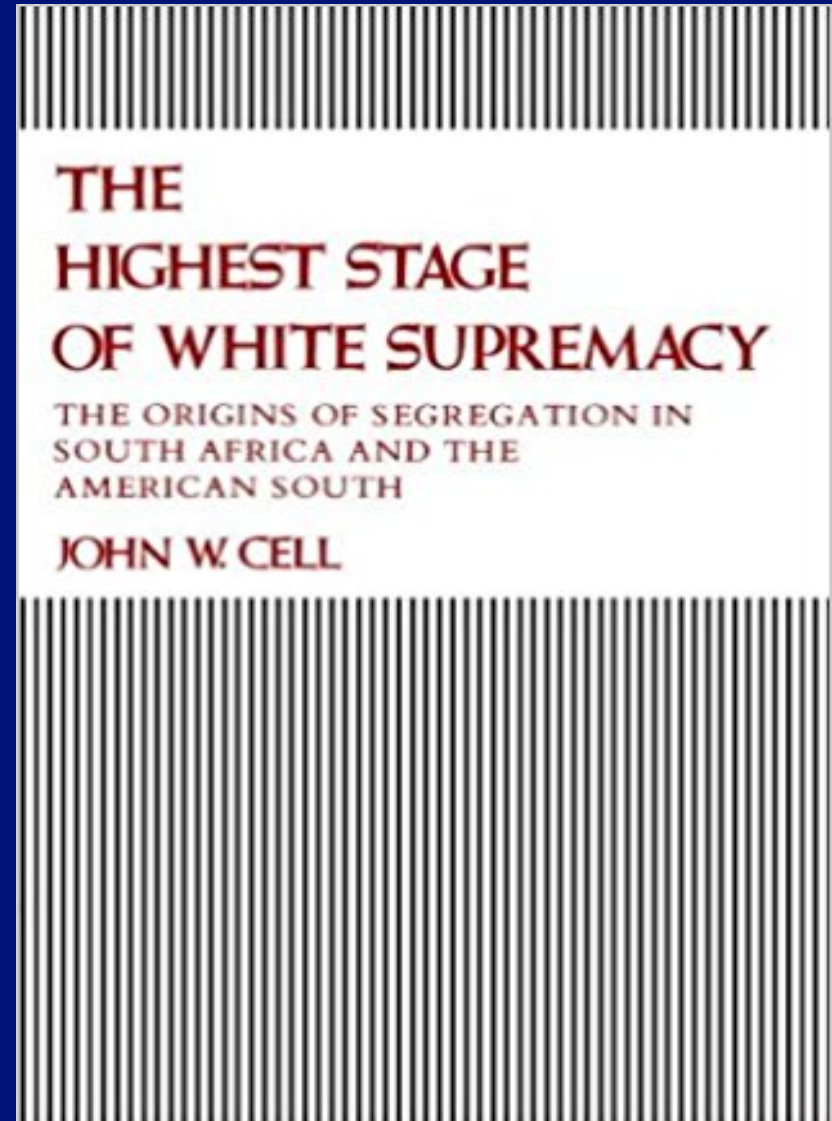
- As is the forced removal and relocation of indigenous peoples
- The institutionalized isolation and marginalization of racial populations has adversely affected life chances in multiple ways

African American Segregation: History -I

- Segregation refers to the physical separation of the races by enforced residence in different areas. It was
- Imposed by legislation
- Supported by major economic institutions
- Enshrined in the housing policies of the federal government
- Enforced by the judicial system and vigilant neighborhood organizations
- Legitimized by ideology of white supremacy that was advocated by religious & other cultural institutions

Racial Segregation Is ...

- One of the most successful **domestic policies** of the 20th century
- "the dominant system of racial regulation and control" in the U.S



John Cell, 1982

Why Place Matters

Where you live determines access to:

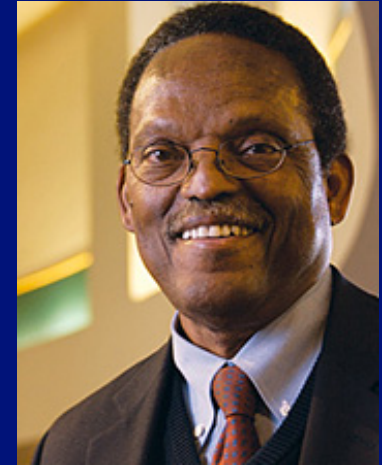
- High-quality schools
- Job opportunities
- Safe, affordable & healthy housing
- Fresh produce & nutritious food
- Safe to exercise, walk or play outside
- Nearby Nature
- Toxins (from highways, factories & other)
- Quality primary care and good hospitals
- Affordable, reliable, public transit
- Social cohesion and social capital



<http://pittsburghpa.gov/finance/>

Racial Differences in Residential Environment

In the 171 largest cities in the U.S., there is not even one city where whites live in equal conditions to those of blacks



“The worst urban context in which whites reside is considerably better than the average context of black communities.”



*Segregation Contributes to Large Racial/
Ethnic Differences in SES*

Residential Segregation and SES

A study of the effects of segregation on young African American adults found that the elimination of segregation would erase black-white differences in:

- Earnings
- High School Graduation Rate
- Unemployment

And reduce racial differences in single motherhood by two-thirds

Cutler, Glaeser & Vigdor, 1997



Median Household Income and Race, 2015

Racial Differences in Income are Substantial:

1 dollar



White

1.23 dollar



Asian

72 cents



Hispanic

62 cents*



AI/AN

59 cents



Black

Median Wealth and Race, 2011

For every dollar of wealth that Whites have,



Asians have 81 cents



Blacks have only 6 cents



Latinos have only 7 cents



Where Racial Inequities in SES are Born

Large Racial/Ethnic Differences in SES that are consequential for life:

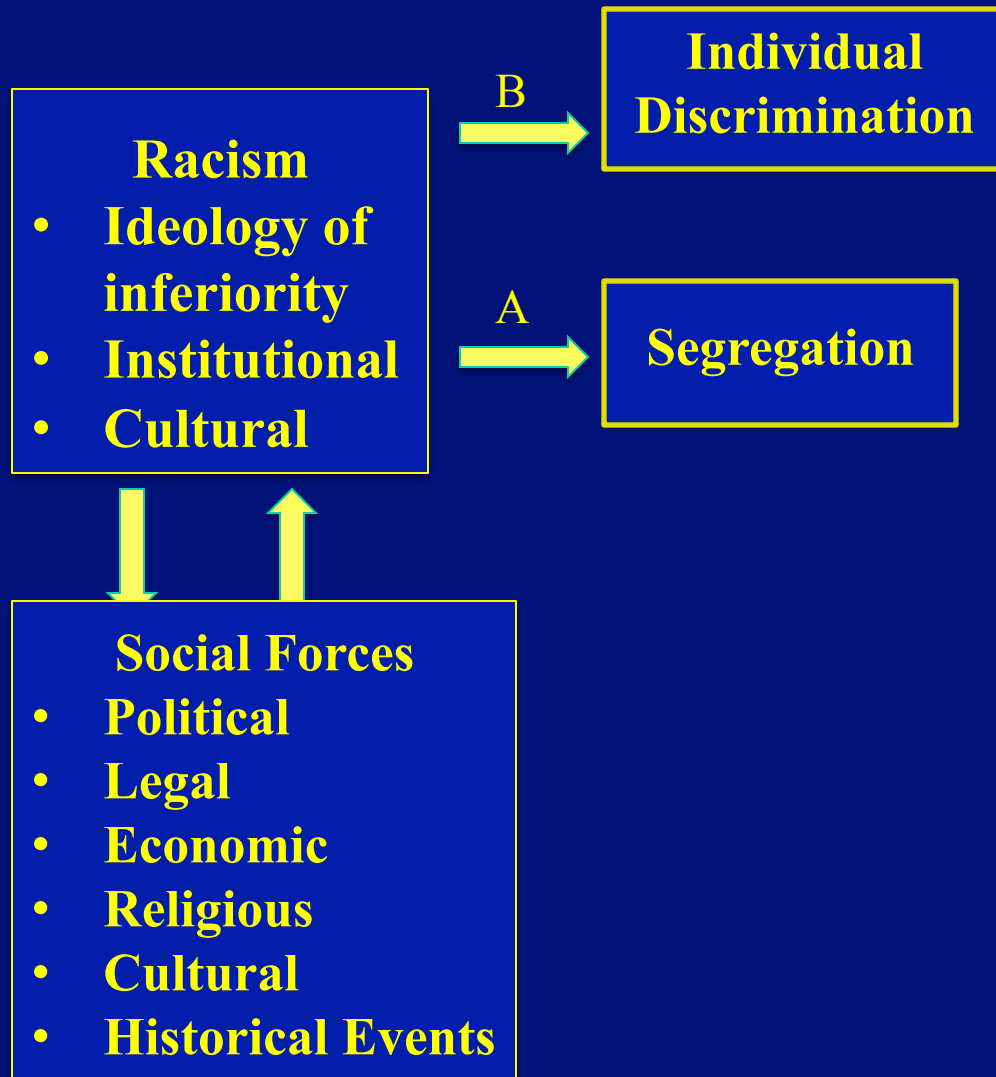
-- They are not acts of God

-- They are not random events

-- They reflect successful implementation of social policies

Racism has produced a truly “rigged system”

The House that Racism Built



The Pervasiveness of Discrimination

Discrimination

Obtaining bank loans

Getting insurance

Buying a home

Renting an apartment

Hailing a taxi

Getting a job

Purchasing a car

Suspended from preschool

Pulled over by police

Receiving a promotion

Cost of bail

Arrested for drug-related crimes

Quality of medical care

Experiences of discrimination are a source of Toxic Stress

Every Day Discrimination

In your day-to-day life how often do these happen to you?

- You are treated with less courtesy than other people.
- You are treated with less respect than other people.
- You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
- People act as if they think you are not smart.
- People act as if they are afraid of you.
- People act as if they think you are dishonest.
- People act as if they're better than you are.
- You are called names or insulted.
- You are threatened or harassed.

What do you think was the main reason for these experiences?



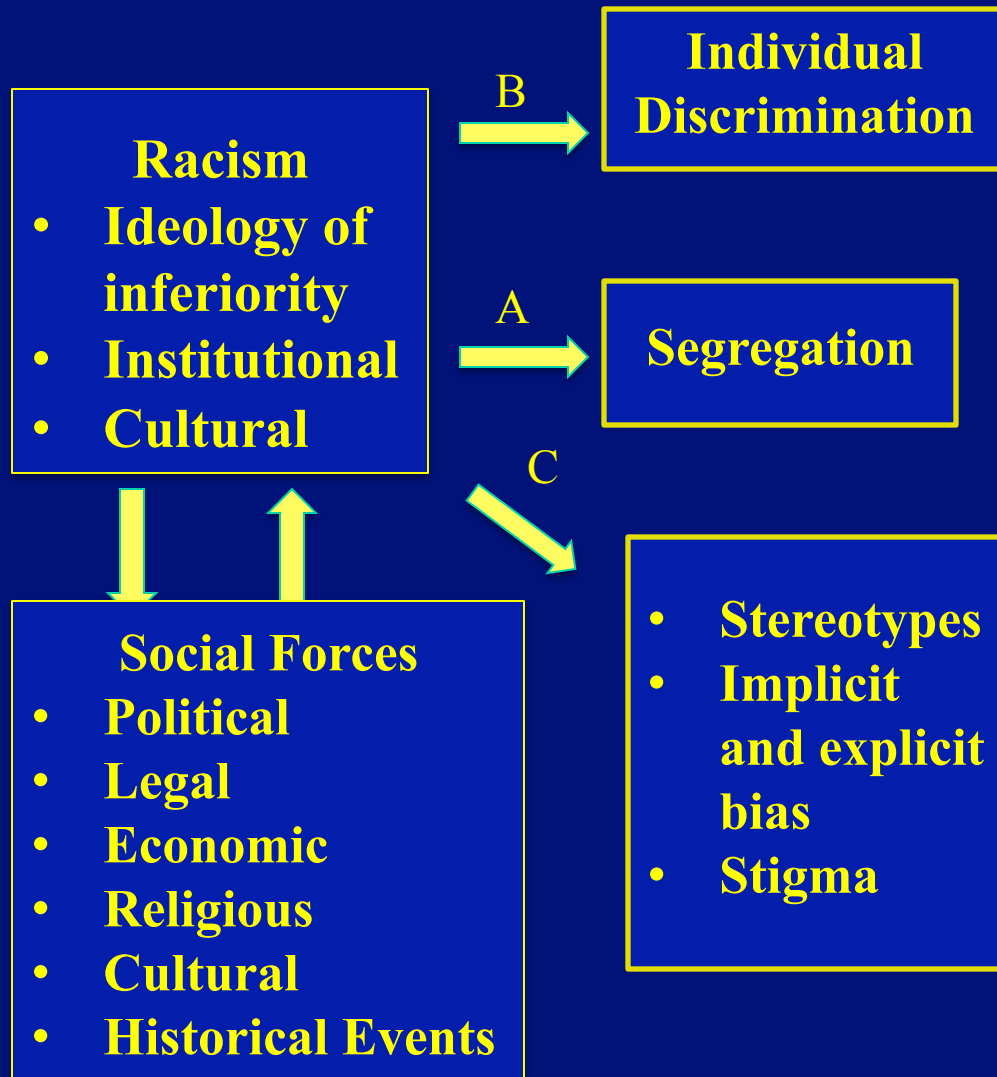
Discrimination & Health: Tene Lewis

- **Everyday Discrimination: positively associated with:**
 - coronary artery calcification (Lewis et al., Psy Med, 2006)
 - C-reactive protein (Lewis et al., Brain Beh Immunity, 2010)
 - blood pressure (Lewis et al., J Gerontology: Bio Sci & Med Sci 2009)
 - **lower** birth weight (Earnshaw et al., Ann Beh Med, 2013)
 - cognitive impairment (Barnes et al., 2012)
 - poor sleep [**object. & subject.**] (Lewis et al, Hlth Psy, 2012)
 - mortality (Barnes et al., J Gerontology: Bio Sci & Med Sci, 2008).
 - visceral fat (Lewis et al., Am J Epidemiology, 2011)
-

Discrimination and Allostatic Load

- 331 Blacks (20 year olds), 9 rural counties in Georgia
- Discrimination assessed at age 16, 17, and 18
- Allostatic load assessed at age 20; overnight cortisol, epinephrine, norepinephrine, SBP, DBP, CRP, BMI
- 79% of sample had low and increasing levels of discrimination; 22% had stably high levels
- Stably high levels of discrimination as a teen linked to higher allostatic load at age 20
- Association increased when adjusted for CES-D, life stress, socioeconomic risk and unhealthy behavior.

The House that Racism Built



*Where do Negative Racial Stereotypes
come from?*

Racial Stereotypes in Our Culture

- BEAGLE Project
- 10 million words
- Sample of books, newspapers, magazine articles, etc. that average college-level student would read in lifetime
- Allows us to assess how often Americans have seen or heard words paired together over their lifetime

Stereotypes in Our Culture

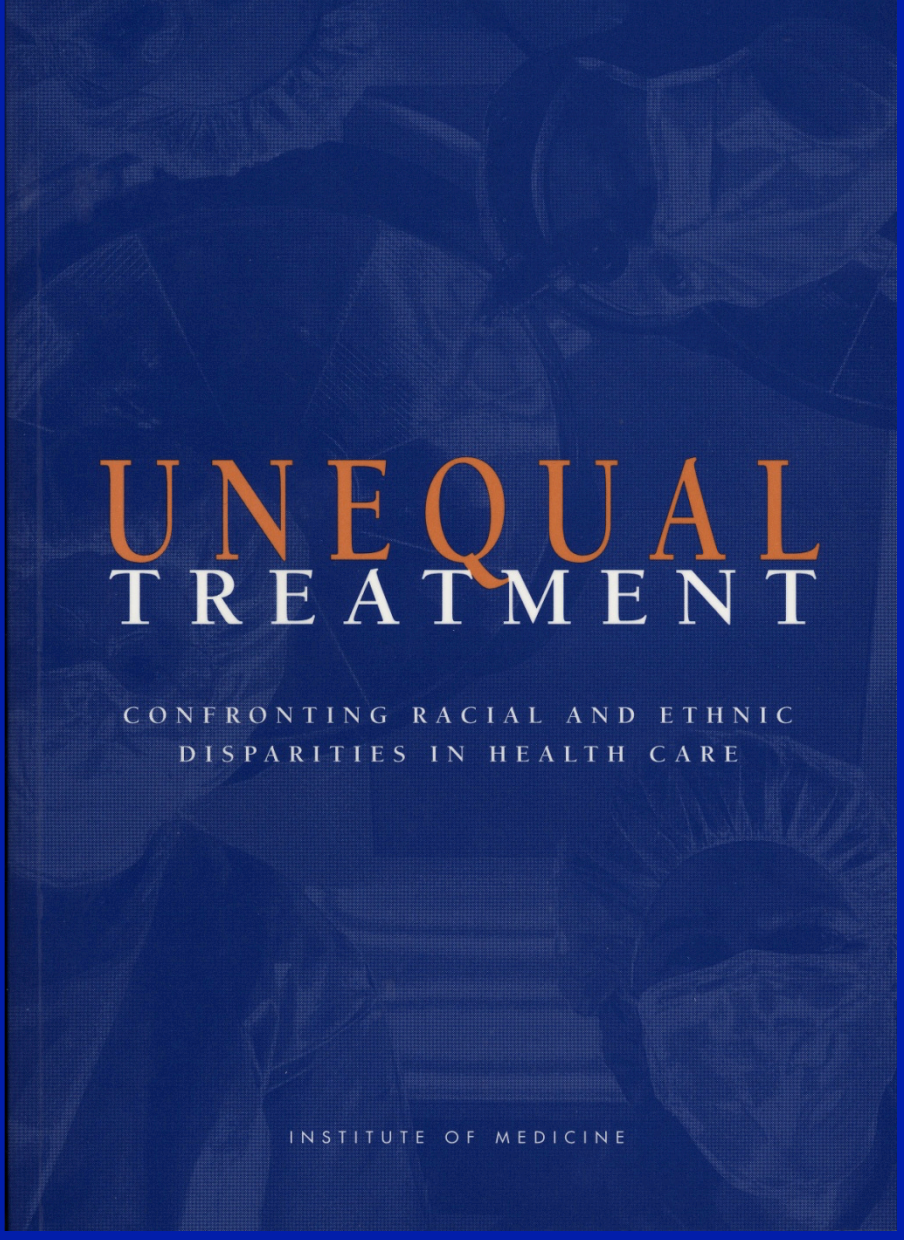
BLACK	poor	.64	WHITE	wealthy	.48
BLACK	violent	.43	WHITE	progressive	.41
BLACK	religious	.42	WHITE	conventional	.37
BLACK	lazy	.40	WHITE	stubborn	.32
BLACK	cheerful	.40	WHITE	successful	.30
BLACK	dangerous	.33	WHITE	educated	.30
FEMALE	distant	.37	MALE	dominant	.46
FEMALE	warm	.35	MALE	leader	.31
FEMALE	gentle	.34	MALE	logical	.31
FEMALE	passive	.34	MALE	strong	.31

Stereotypes in Our Culture

BLACK	poor	.64	WHITE	wealthy	.48
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BLACK	cheerful	.40	WHITE	successful	.30
BLACK	dangerous	.33	WHITE	educated	.30
BLACK	charming	.28	WHITE	ethical	.28
BLACK	merry	.28	WHITE	greedy	.22
BLACK	ignorant	.27	WHITE	sheltered	.21
BLACK	musical	.26	WHITE	selfish	.20

Negative stereotypes about race remain
deeply embedded in our culture

Negative Stereotypes Trigger Racial
Discrimination



UNEQUAL
TREATMENT

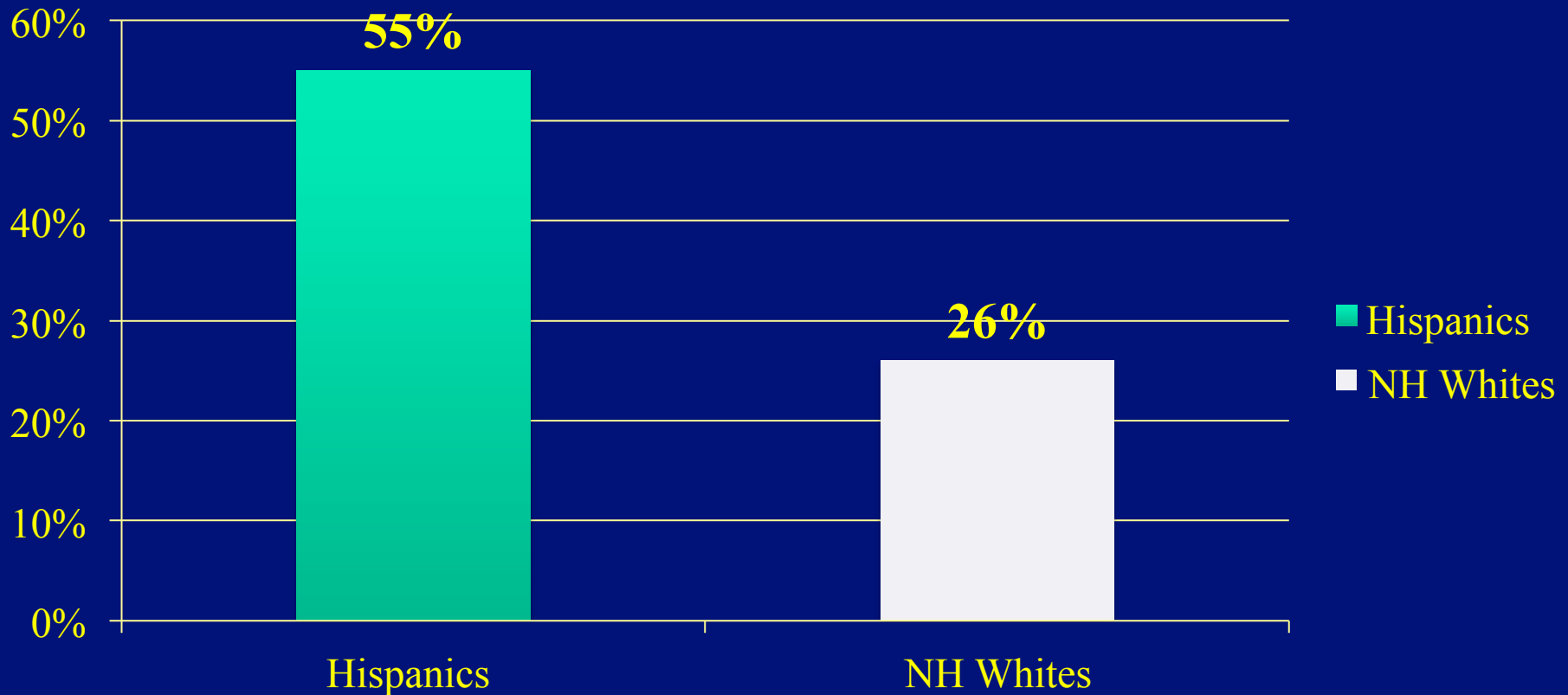
CONFRONTING RACIAL AND ETHNIC
DISPARITIES IN HEALTH CARE

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

Racial Bias in Medical Care

Ethnicity and Pain Medicine

Percent of Patients with broken bone receiving no analgesia



Disparities in the Clinical Encounter: The Core Paradox

How could well-meaning and highly educated health professionals, working in their usual circumstances with diverse populations of patients, create a pattern of care that appears to be discriminatory?

Unconscious Discrimination

- When one holds a negative stereotype about a group and meets someone who fits the stereotype s/he will discriminate against that individual
 - Stereotype-linked bias is an
 - Automatic process
 - Unconscious process
 - It occurs even among persons who are not prejudiced
 - I am a prejudiced person
-

Faster than the Twinkling of an Eye!

- Studies find that most Americans have rapid and unconscious emotional and neural reactions to blacks
- A millisecond is 1/1000 of a second
- 100 milliseconds - how quickly an individual's race is noticed and whether or not that person is trustworthy
- 300 - 400 milliseconds: time for human eye to blink
- 800 milliseconds: human resting heart cycle time

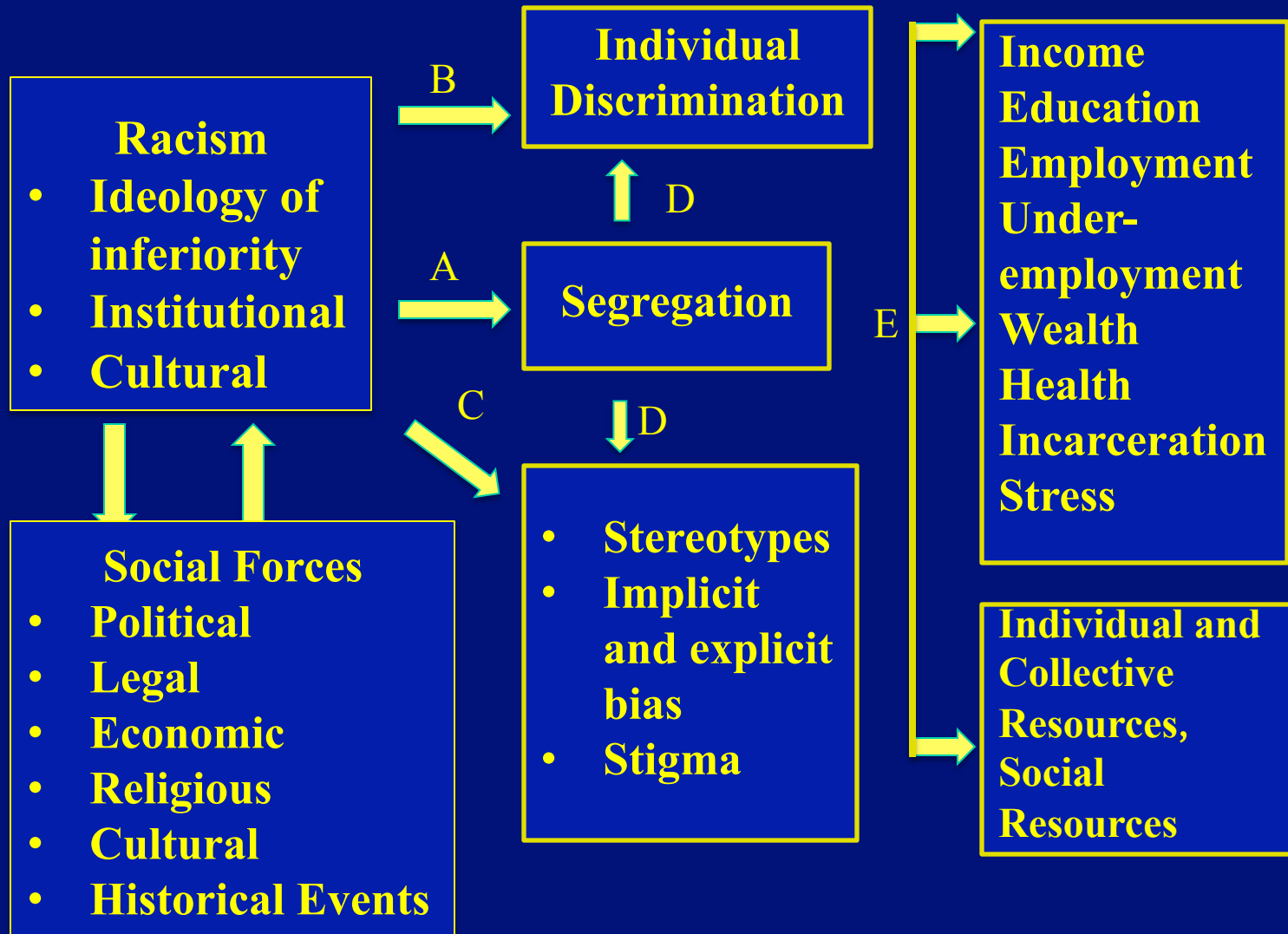
The Devine Solution

- Non-black adults can be motivated to increase their awareness of bias against blacks, their concerns about the effects of bias and to implement strategies which were effective in producing substantial reductions in bias that remained evident three months later
- Implicit biases viewed as deeply engrained habits that can be replaced by learning new prejudice-reducing strategies including stereotype replacement, counter-stereotype imaging, individuation, perspective taking **and** increasing opportunities for interracial contact.

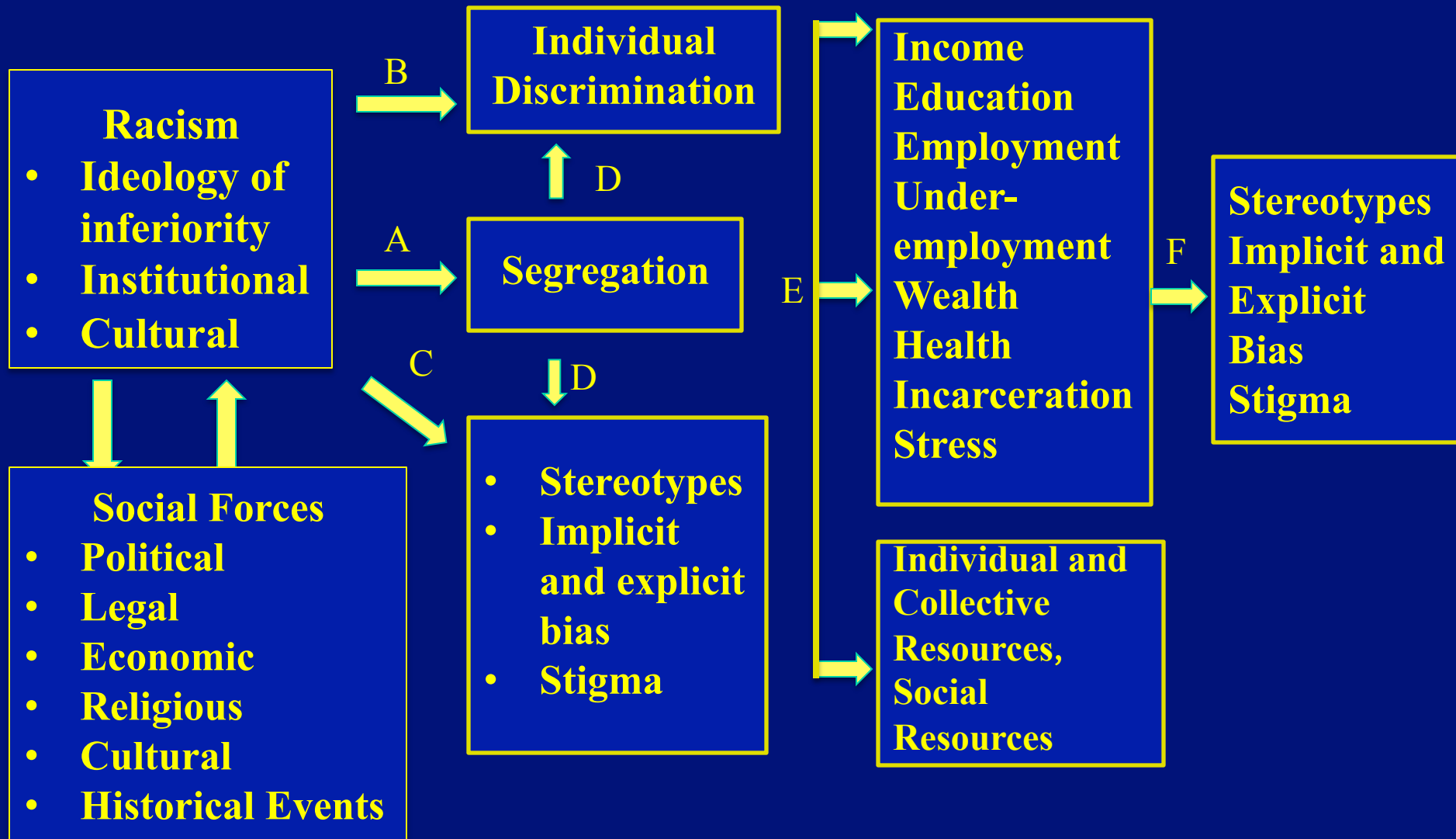
Internalized Racism:

Acceptance of society's negative characterization can adversely affect health

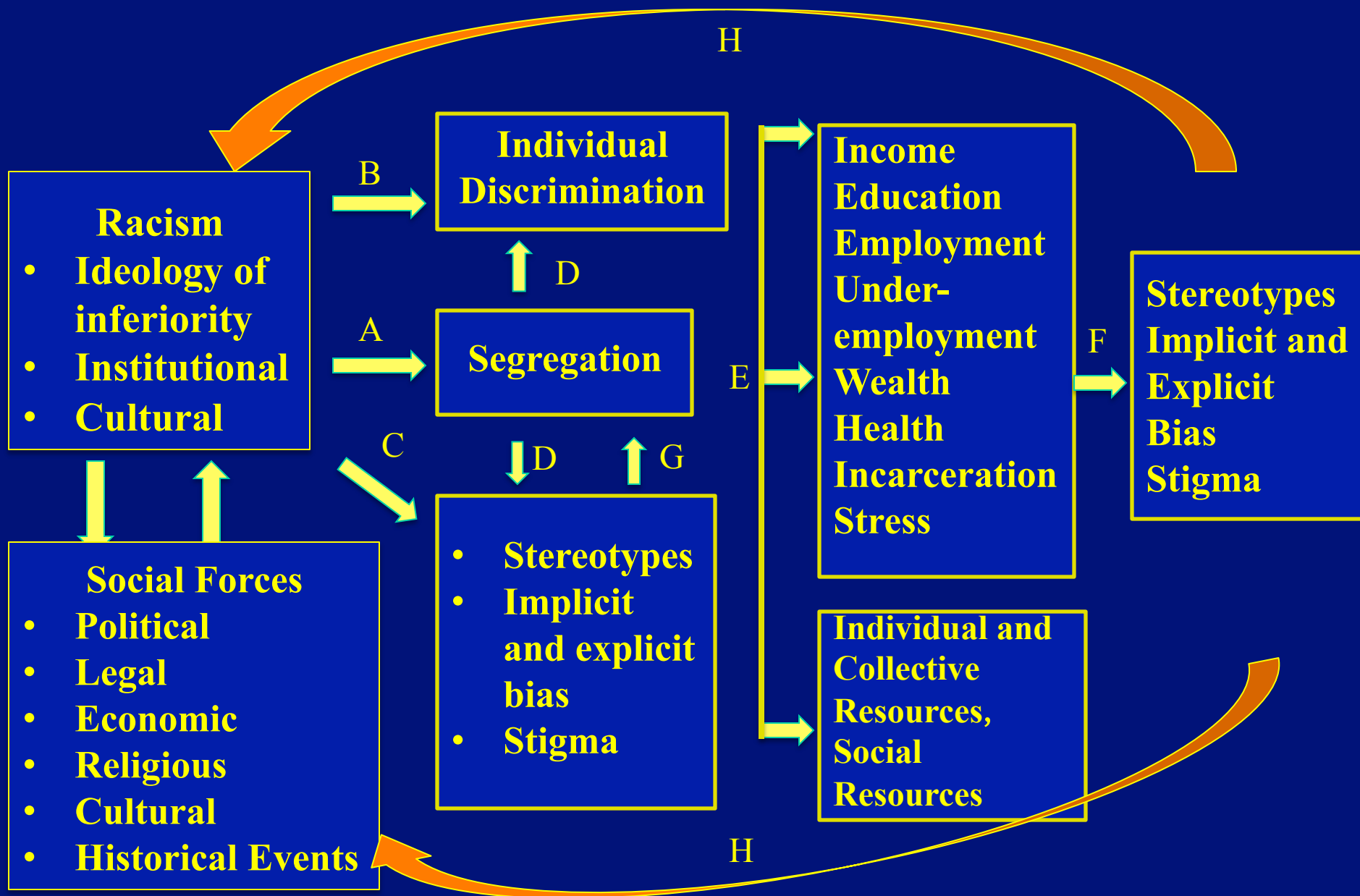
The House that Racism Built



The House that Racism Built



The House that Racism Built



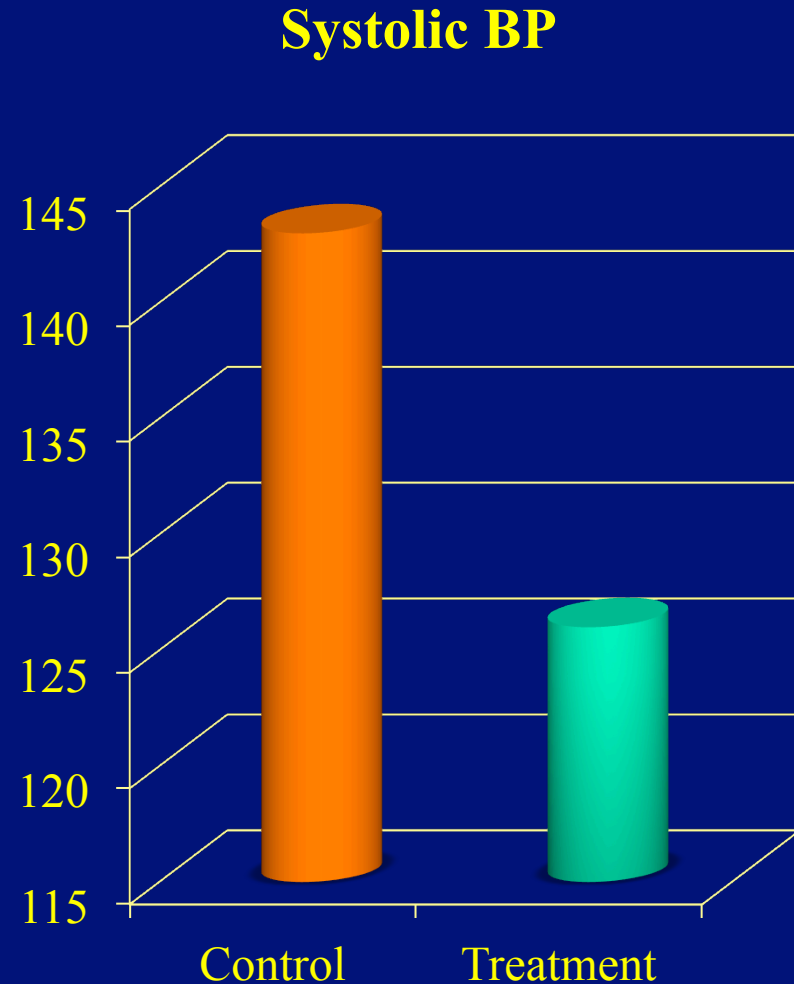
Improving America's Health
Start Early

Carolina Abecedarian Project (ABC)

- 1972-77, economically disadvantaged children, birth to age 5, randomized to early childhood program
- Program offered a safe and nurturing environment, good nutrition and pediatric care
- At age 21, fewer symptoms of depression, lower marijuana use, more active lifestyle, & educational & vocational assets benefits
- In mid-30's, lower levels of multiple risk factors for CVD and metabolic disease. Effects stronger for males

Carolina Abecedarian Project (ABC)

- Example: systolic BP
143 mm Hg in male controls vs. 126 mm Hg in the treatment group
- One in 4 males in control group met criteria for metabolic syndrome compared to none in the treatment group
- Lower BMI at zero to 5 yrs equals a lower BMI in their 30s



Improving America's Health
Comprehensive Approaches

Purpose Built Communities: Comprehensive

- Based on efforts in Atlanta's East Lake district
 - Purpose Built Communities uses integrative strategies including cradle-to-college educational opportunities, mixed-income housing, early child development programs, employment support and recreational opportunities
 - Community engagement and philanthropy
 - **Key:** addressing all of the challenges faced by disadvantaged communities simultaneously
 - Purpose Built Communities in Atlanta, New Orleans, Indianapolis, Charlotte, among others
-

Implementing the Purpose Built Model



Strong local leadership. A proven national model. Best in class partners.

East Lake Meadows - 1995

Safety

- 18x national crime rate
- 90% of families victims of a felony each year
- \$35 million a year drug trade

Housing

- 100% public housing
- 1400 residents in 650 apartments
- 40% of units unlivable

Employment

- 13% employment
- 59% of adults on welfare
- Median income of ~\$4,500

Education

- One of lowest performing schools in Georgia
- 5% of 5th graders meet state math standards
- 30% graduation rate

Villages of East Lake - Present

Safety

- 73% reduction in crime
- 90% lower violent crime

Housing

- High-quality, privately managed housing
- Mixed-income (50% public housing, 50% market rate)
- 1400 residents in 542 apartments

Employment

- 75% employment in public housing, remainder in job training, elderly or disabled
- Median income of ~ \$15k in public housing households

Education

- ~1500 in Pre-K through 10th
- 98% meet or exceed state standards
- A top performing school in Atlanta and the state

Improving America's Health

Addressing Economic Well-being

Economic Policy is Health Policy

In the last 60 years, black-white differences in health have narrowed and widened with black-white differences in income

Religion and Health Inequalities

What role can religious individuals and organizations Play?

Religion and Health Inequalities

Religious involvement can buffer the negative effects of stress on health

Religion & Discrimination: A Balm in Gilead?

- Prospective analyses of the National Study of Black Americans found that multiple aspects of religious engagement:
 - religious attendance
 - church-based social support, and
 - seeking religious guidance in everyday life
- reduced the negative effects of experiences of racial discrimination on mental health

Religion and Health Inequalities

Religious institutions can raise awareness levels of the striking social inequalities that give rise to inequalities in health and multiple other domains of life

Religion and Health Inequalities

Religious institutions can uplift solutions
and be agents of social change

Religion and Health Inequalities

Religious institutions can deliberately and intentionally spur compassion, engender empathy, and facilitate the political will for sustained action to initiate and maintain social justice

Creating the Conditions for Change

The Empathy Gap?

“The most difficult social problem in the matter of Negro health is the peculiar attitude of the nation toward the well-being of the race. There have... been few other cases in the history of civilized peoples where human suffering has been viewed with such peculiar indifference”
W.E. B. Du Bois (1899 [1967], p.163).

Lack of Empathy, Evident Early in Life

- Mainly white 5-, 7- and 10-year olds rate pain of black and white children
- No racial bias at age 5
- Children show weak bias (blacks feel less pain) at age 7
- At age 10 children rate pain of black child less than white one (strong, reliable racial bias)
- Unrelated to social preference (would like to be friends with)
- We may need to start empathy training very young



http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/17/racial-empathy-gap_n_4118252.html

Religion and Racial Prejudice

How are the Two Phenomena Related?

Religion and Intolerance -I

- Early research found that religious people were more likely to be prejudiced
- The more orthodox the religiosity, the greater the prejudice
- The type of religious orientation matters
- Subsequent research revealed that an extrinsic religious orientation was associated with higher levels of racial prejudice while an intrinsic religious orientation predicted lower levels.

Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Religion

- Extrinsic religion is utilitarian, rules-oriented and legalistic. Extrinsic religious involvement is often driven by a desire to obtain external benefits, such as security, status and self-justification

- In contrast, intrinsic religion refers to religious involvement that is personally meaningful, integrated into one's worldview and serves as a central motivating force that affects all aspects of life

Religion and Intolerance -II

- Some types of religious beliefs and orientations can lead to rigidity in thinking, prejudice, & intolerance
- Recent research documents that a fundamentalist orientation, defined as a rigid, close-minded worldview in which the individual believes that his or her religious beliefs are absolutely correct is predictive of higher levels of prejudice
- What seems to be important is not the content of the religious beliefs but the inflexibility with which one's beliefs are held.

What does God *really* want?

The Least of These



- Jesus presented to His disciples the scene of the great judgment day.
 - He indicates that their eternal destiny turned on just one point:
 - What did His professed followers do or fail to do for Him in the person of the poor, the stigmatized and the suffering.
-

God's Call

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶ naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’”

Matthew 25:34 – 36 NASB

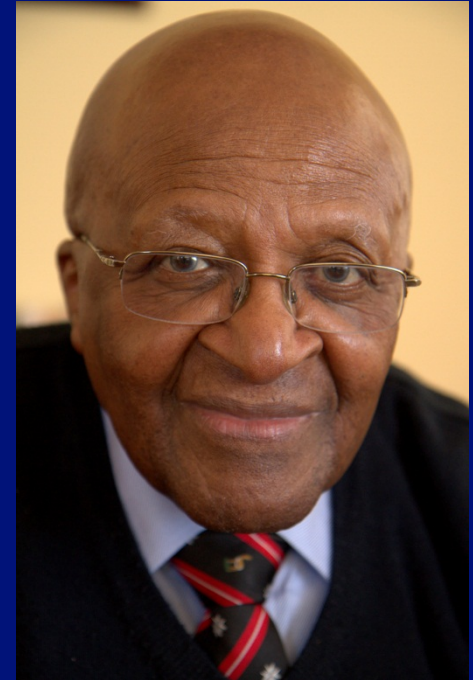
"True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

- - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Religious Groups Need to Make a Choice

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor...”

Desmond Tutu



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=36964977>

Neutrality Not An Option

“...If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.”



[http://hopeforthesold.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/](http://hopeforthesold.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Elephant-and-Mouse.jpg)
Elephant-and-Mouse.jpg

Desmond Tutu

A Call to Action

“Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

- Robert F. Kennedy