

Racism in Healthcare

Moving from Scientific Racism and Medical
Apartheid to Healthcare Equality

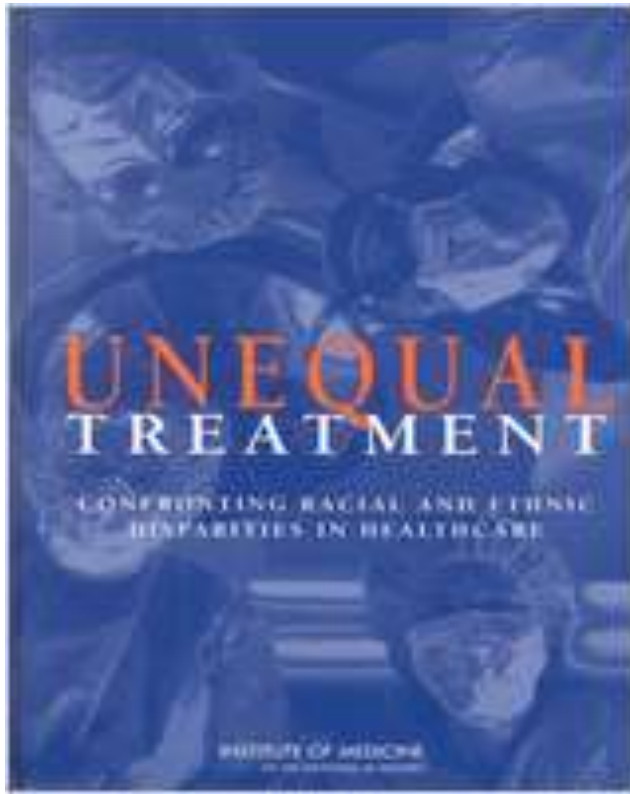
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Presented at Physicians for a National Health Program Forum

November 19, 2019



Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care

Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Understanding and Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care; Editors: Brian D. Smedley, Adrienne Y. Stith, and Alan R. Nelson.

Washington (DC): [National Academies Press \(US\)](#); 2003.

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“Racial and ethnic minorities tend to receive a lower quality of healthcare than non-minorities, even when access-related factors, such as patients' insurance status and income, are controlled. The sources of these disparities are complex, are rooted in historic and contemporary inequities, and involve many participants at several levels, including health systems, their administrative and bureaucratic processes, utilization managers, healthcare professionals, and patients”

Origins of Racist Ideas in the Colonies

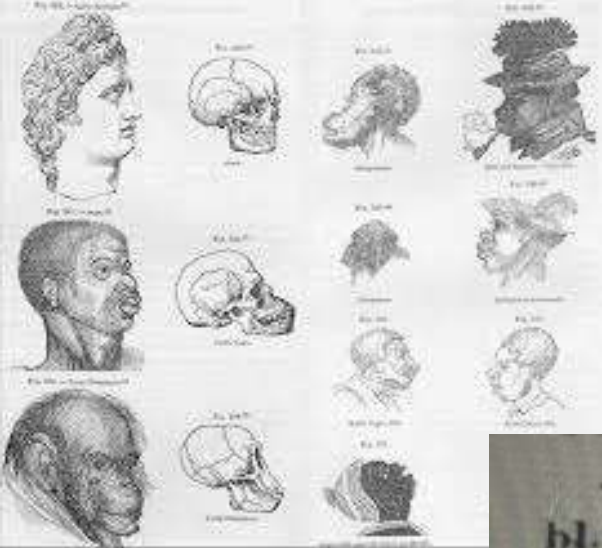
- 17th century: *Richard Mather, John Cotton, Cotton Mather*- puritan ministers in New England inherited their European forefathers ideas that **African slavery was normal, natural and holy.**
- **Chattel slavery 1619 - 1865:** African Americans treated as personal property and bought and sold as commodities. Doctor/slave owner dyad
- Climate theory and Curse theory were used as an explanation of black skin and the justification for slavery
- **Colonization:** *Jefferson, Lincoln.* The American Colonization Society was formed in 1817 to send African Americans to Africa or South America as an alternative to emancipation in the United States
- The abolitionist physician, *Benjamin Rush*, and anti-slavery advocate, *Samuel Sandhope Smith*, also had some racist ideas.

Scientific Racism

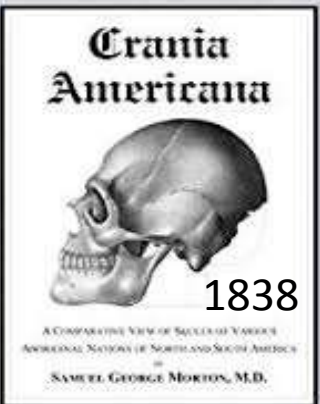
Scientific racism: sometimes referred to as race biology, is a **pseudoscientific belief** that ***empirical evidence exists to support or justify racism*** (racial discrimination), racial inferiority, or racial superiority.

Ethnology: The study of the characteristics, differences and relationships between various peoples

- **Polygenism**- is a theory of human origins which states that the *human races are of different origins (polygenesis)*.
- **Monogenism**- a *single origin* of humanity (*monogenesis*).
- **Eugenics**- controlled breeding to improve a human population. *Sir Francis Galton*



Phrenology



Samuel George Morton

Physician and natural scientist



Crania Americana

V. "The ETHIOPIAN RACE is characterised by a black complexion, and black, woolly hair; the eyes are large and prominent, the nose broad and flat, lips thick, and the mouth wide; the head long and narrow, the forehead low, the cheek bones prominent, the jaws projecting, and the chin small. In disposition, the negro is joyous, flexible, and indolent; while the many nations which compose this race present a singular diversity of intellectual character, of which the far extreme is the lowest grade of humanity."

This race is divided into—17th, *The Negro*; 18th, *The Caffrarian*; 19th, *The Hottentot*; 20th, *The Oceanic Negro*; 21st, *The Australian*; and 22d, *The Alforian families*. The latter family is most numerous in New Guinea, the Moluccas, and Magindano.

From the American Journal of Science, No. 2, Vol. 3S.)

Crania Americana: or a Comparative view of the Skulls of various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America; to which is prefixed an Essay on the Varieties of the Human Species illustrated by seventy-eight plates and a coloured map. By SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON, M. D. Professor of Anatomy in the medical department of Pennsylvania College, at Philadelphia, &c. &c. Philadelphia: J. Dobson. London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co. Letter press, pp. 296, folio, 1839.

which Blumenbach considers some of them. He considers the human species as consisting of twenty-two families, which he arranges under the heads of the Caucasian, Mongolian, Malay, American, and Ethiopian races.

I. "The CAUCASIAN RACE is characterised by a naturally fair skin, susceptible of every tint; hair fine, long, and curling, and of various colours. The skull is large and oval, and its anterior portion full and elevated. The face is small in proportion to the head, of an oval form, with well-proportioned features. The nasal bones are arched, the chin full, and the teeth vertical. The race is distinguished for the facility with which it attains the highest intellectual endowments."

1840 US Census

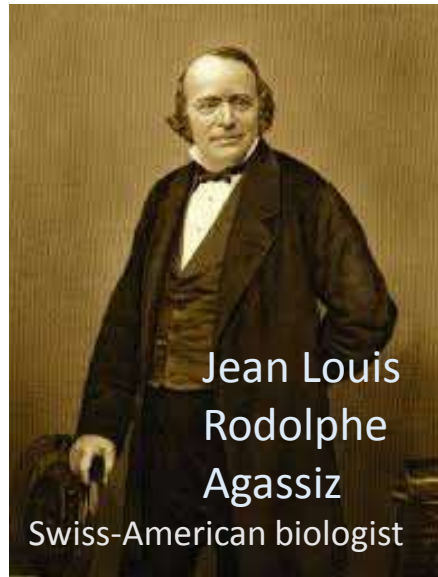
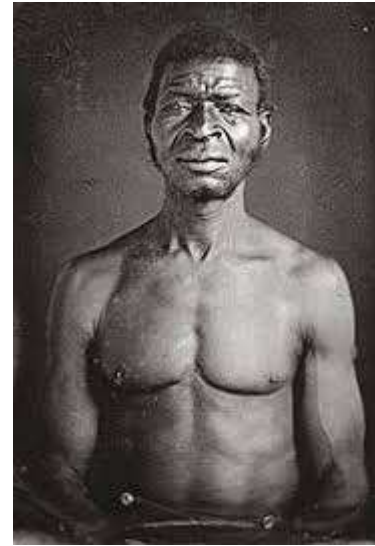
- The 1840 Census **intentionally erred** to show **more lunacy/insanity among free blacks in the north than in enslaved blacks in the south** in order to justify slavery.
- Psychiatrist and statistician, *Edward Jarvis*, and black physician, *James McCune Smith*, published reviews demonstrating the errors in the 1840 Census.
- US Secretary of State, *John C. Calhoun*, certified the census correct and promoted the errors.



Agassiz Zealy slave portraits

Daguerreotypes

Columbia, SC 1850



Jean Louis
Rodolphe
Agassiz

Swiss-American biologist



Similar Displays:

- Sara Baartman*- "Hottentot Venus"
- Joice Heth*- "161 year old mammy"
- Ota Benga*- displayed in Bronx Zoo

Agassez expressed revulsion on first encountering African Americans.

Josiah Clark Nott

American Surgeon and anthropologist 1804-1873

Josiah Clarke Nott- “the negro achieves his greatest perfection, physical and moral, and also greatest longevity, in a state of slavery”.

Noted for his studies on Yellow fever, Nott was a founder of the [Medical College](#) of Alabama, established in Mobile in 1858. He served there as a Professor of Surgery. During the [American Civil War](#), he served as a [Confederate](#) surgeon and [staff officer](#).



Apollo Belvidere



Greek



Negro



Creole Negro



Young chimpanzee



Young chimpanzee

Illustration from *Types of Mankind* (1854), [Josiah Clark Nott](#) and [George Robins Gliddon](#).
"Negroes were a [creational](#) rank between [Greeks](#) and [chimpanzees](#)."

white man voluntarily imposes on himself. If force be used to make them do more, they invariably do less and less, until they fall into a state of impassivity, in which they are more plague than profit—worthless as laborers, insensible and indifferent to punishment, or even to life; or, in other words, they fall into the disease which I have named Dysethæsia Ethiopica, characterized by hebetude of mind and insensibility of body, caused by over-working and bad treatment. Some knowledge of the ethnology of the prognathous race is absolutely necessary for the prevention and cure of this malady in all its various forms and stages. Dirt eating, or Cachexia Africana, is another disease, like Dysethæsia Ethiopica, growing out of ethnical elements peculiar to the prognathous race. The ethnical elements assimilating the negro to the mule, although giving rise to the last named disease, are of vast importance to the prognathous race, because they guaranty to that race an ample protection against the abuses of arbitrary power. A white man, like a blooded horse, can be worked to death. Not so the negro, whose ethnical elements, like the mule, restrict the limits of arbitrary power

Serial: Debow's review, Agricultural, commercial, industrial progress and resources.

Title: *Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans* [Volume 25, Issue 1, Jul 1858; pp. 45-56]

Author: Cartwright, Dr.

Collection: [Making of America Journal Articles](#)

Samuel Adolphus Cartwright

Mississippi/Louisiana Physician 1793-1863



Drapetomania-
mental illness
causing the
desire to flee
captivity

URL: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moajrnl/acg1336.1-25.001/59>

20th Century Scientific Racism

- **Birth control** activist and nurse, *Margaret Sanger*, a collaborator with *W.E.B. DuBois*, was a proponent of eugenics.
- **Mississippi appendectomy-** *Fannie Lou Hamer*
- Psychologist, *Arthur Jensen* (1969), and physicist, *William Shockley* (1960s) promoted the development of **I.Q. tests** (1916) to verify that the upper-class whites were proven to be more intelligent
- **The Bell Curve (1994)** by *Richard Herrnstein* and *Charles Murray*- racial difference in intelligence
- **Human genetic variation:** 99.9% the same. Is racial difference explained in the .1%?

Research and Treatment Abuses

Non-therapeutic and harmful research and harmful experimental treatment

- **“The future of the negro lies more in the research laboratory than in schools.... When diseased, he should be registered and forced to make treatments before he offers his diseased mind and body on the altar of academic and professional education.”**

Thomas Murrell, M.D. United States Public Health Service 1910



Illustration of surgeon, Dr. James Marion Sims (1813-1883), with Anarcha by Robert Thom.

Anarcha was subjected to 30 experimental surgeries without anesthesia by Sims, the “father of gynecology”



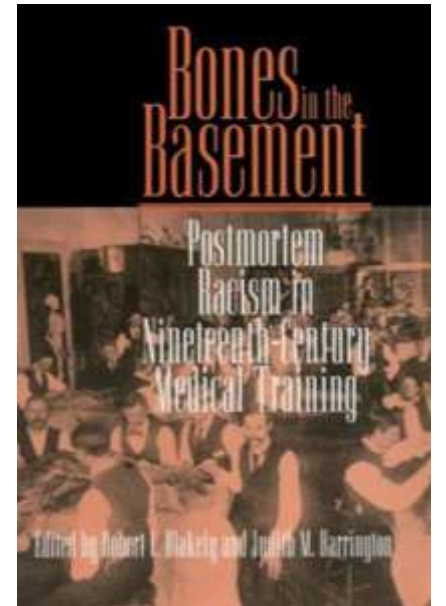
Probably a more accurate representation of Sims' experimental subjects



Grandison Harris:

Slave, Porter, Judge,
Teaching assistant and
Resurrectionist

He was affiliated with
Medical College of Georgia
from 1852 to 1911



**Slaves and Blacks were
targets for autopsy and
dissection.**

Georgia Medical College Class of 1877

Historical Collection of the American Botanical Society, University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD, USA

Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment

1932-1972: 399 infected, 201 controls

The New York Times

Syphilis Victims in U.S. Study Went Untreated for 40 Years

By JEAN HELLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, July 25—For 40 years the United States Public Health Service has conducted a study in which human beings with syphilis, who were

have serious doubts about the morality of the study, also say that it is too late to treat the syphilis in any surviving participants.



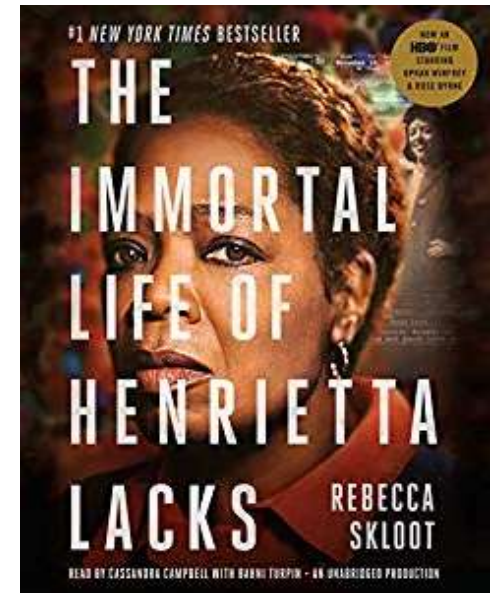
Nurse
Eunice
Rivers

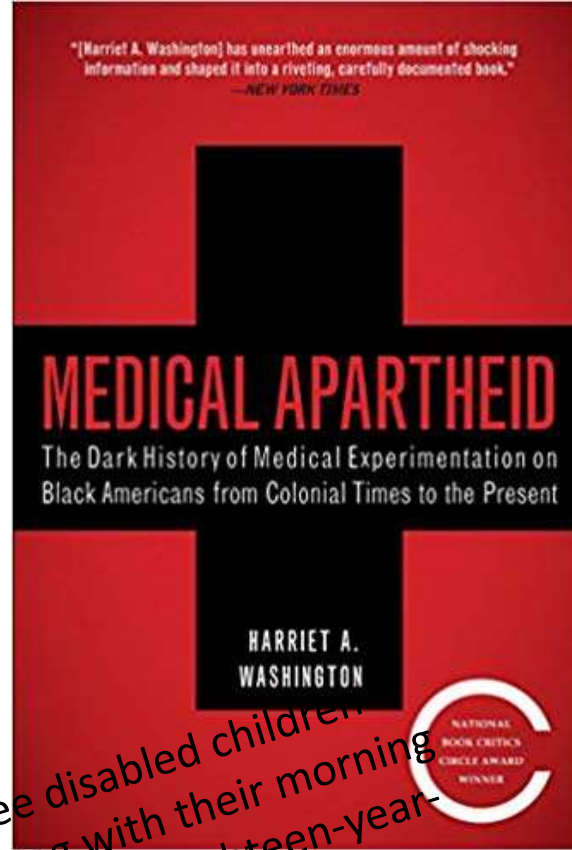
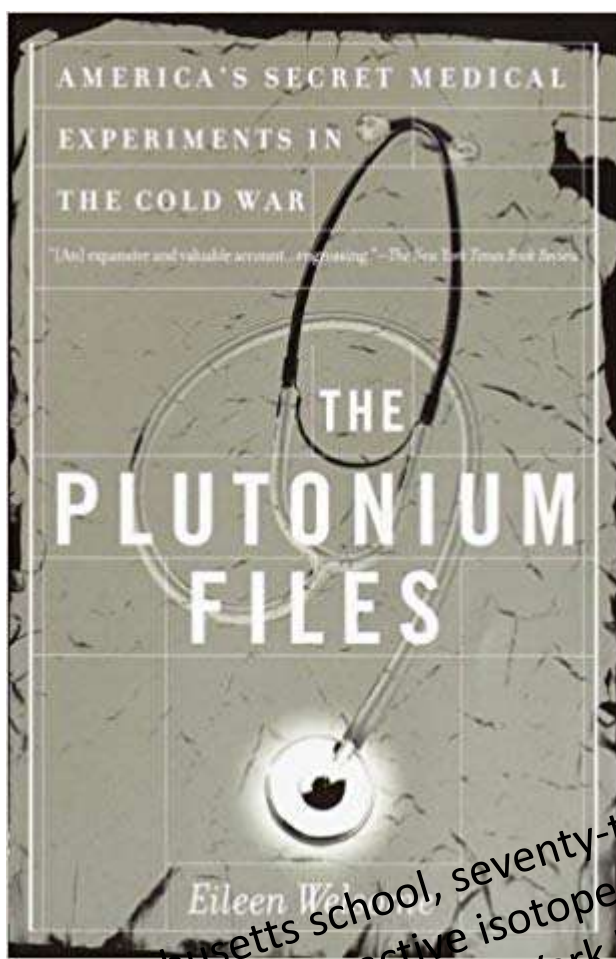


Blood and spinal fluid were frequently drawn, providing a natural reservoir of syphilis bacteria for experimentation. The victims' bodies were sought after for autopsy.

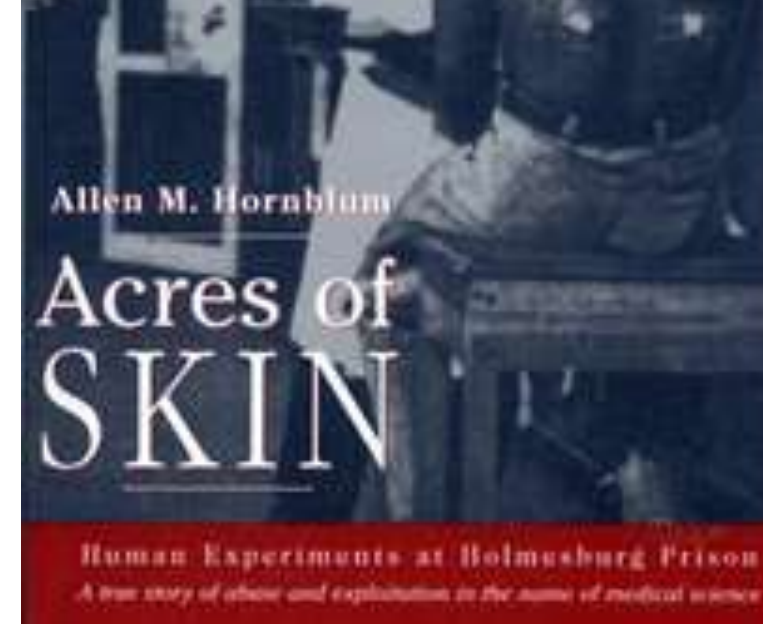
Exploitation of the Black Patients

- Biopsy tissue taken from **Henrietta Lacks**' cervix in 1951 at Johns Hopkins Hospital was cultured and distributed by research pathologist, George Otto Gey, without her or her heirs' consent
- Large profits were generated from **HeLa** cells derived from her cervical adenocarcinoma but no monetary distribution was ever made to the patient or her heirs
- Henrietta Lacks' heirs remained in poverty, mostly uninsured and suffered poor health
- The California Supreme Court (1990) held in *Moore v. Regents of the University of California* that individuals do not have an ownership interest in their cells after the cells are removed from their bodies
- *"HeLa has helped build thousands of careers, not to mention more than 60,000 scientific studies, with nearly 10 more being published every day, revealing the secrets of everything from aging and cancer to mosquito mating and the cellular effects of working in sewers."* New York Times, Lisa Margonelli, Feb. 5, 2010





Other reasons for black "iatrophobia"



In a Massachusetts school, seventy-three disabled children were spoon fed radioactive isotopes along with their morning oatmeal....In an upstate New York hospital, an eighteen-year-old woman, believing she was being treated for a pituitary disorder, was injected with plutonium by Manhattan Project doctors....At a Tennessee prenatal clinic, 829 pregnant women were served "vitamin cocktails"--in truth, drinks containing radioactive iron--as part of their prenatal treatment....

"Rules don't apply to geniuses." Dr. Albert Kligman

During the 1950s and 1960s, prison inmates were commonly used for the preliminary testing of experimental drugs, and Holmesburg Prison was no exception.

Medical Apartheid



Jim Crow
(Neo-slavery):
sharecropping
Involuntary
servitude,
peonage

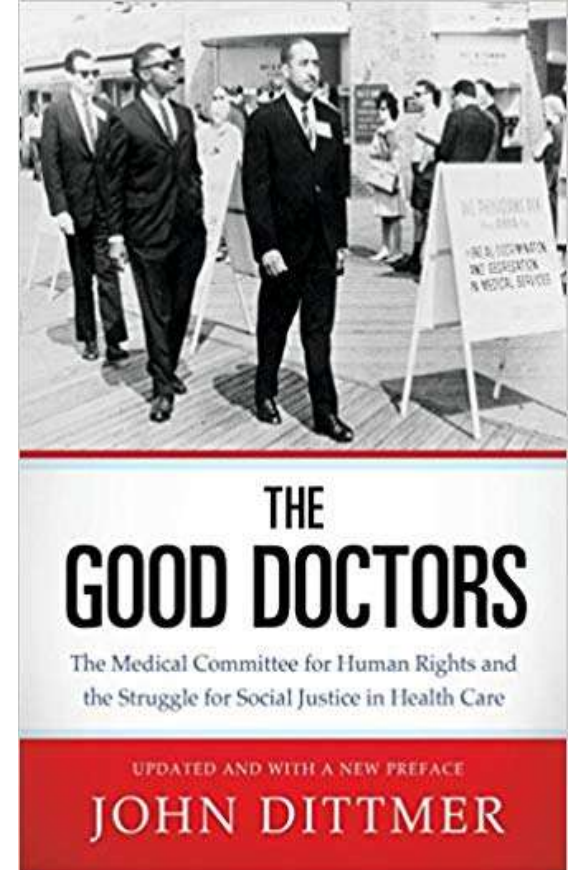
“Injustice in
healthcare is the
most shocking and
inhumane”

Martin Luther King



Medical Apartheid

- **Segregation:** separate and unequal health facilities: private vs public hospitals. Jim Crow hospitals
- **Health insurance:** HMO vs PPO; Medicare vs Medicare Advantage; Medicaid vs private ins.
- **Providers:** black doctors in the south were denied access to medical societies and therefore hospital privileges until mid-1960s; clinic vs private office or faculty practice



Moving from Scientific Racism and Medical Apartheid *Why should you care ?*

- *“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” Martin Luther King*

- IOM 2013- US Health in International Perspective: shorter lives and poorer health

Of 17 high-income countries studied by the National Institutes of Health in 2013, the “United States had the highest or near-highest prevalence of infant mortality, heart and lung disease, sexually transmitted infections, adolescent pregnancies, injuries, homicides, and disability. Together, such issues place the U.S. at the **bottom of the list for life expectancy.**”

Moving from Scientific Racism and Medical Apartheid

Equal rights and opportunity legislation? Affirmative action?

- IOM 2003- *“The healthcare workforce and its ability to deliver quality care for racial and ethnic minorities can be improved substantially by increasing the proportion of underrepresented U.S. racial and ethnic minorities among health professionals”*

Eliminate for-profit and some public-owned health facilities?

Single payer health insurance? IOM 2003- *“payment systems should avoid fragmentation of health plans along socioeconomic lines.”*

Be aware of implicit bias and prejudice- racist ideas and institutions

Thank you

Questions?

Discussion