Disparities in Pain Care

Bias in Pain Treatment

Across the lifespan and regardless of socioeconomic status, blacks are less likely than whites to receive analgesic medication for pain. Primary care providers are more likely to underestimate pain intensity in blacks than in other sociodemographic groups.

Socioeconomic Status

People with incomes below poverty level are more likely to report pain.

Language Barriers

Less than 20% of health professionals treating Hispanic pain patients reported Spanish proficiency at an advanced level.

Access to Care

Pharmacies located in minority neighborhoods are less likely to carry sufficient prescription analgesics than those located in white neighborhoods.

Learn More...

The above information points to a need for a multidisciplinary approach to pain care and treatment including clinicians' awareness of implicit bias. An IOM report on relieving pain in America (see references) called for a comprehensive population health-level strategy for pain, which is currently in progress under the Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Resources for persons with pain:
- Find a doctor
  http://healthfinder.gov/  
- Talking with your doctor
  http://www.nihs.nih.gov/clearcommunication/talktoyourdoctor.htm  
- Learn more about chronic pain

Resources for care providers:
- Cultural & linguistic competency
  http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlid=54  
- Institute of Medicine report on Relieving Pain in America - http://ow.ly/IBMbC
- Office of Minority Health – Cultural & Linguistic Competency:  

References