

Poverty Reflection

Learning about poverty during IM4 was focused on lack of money and resources to take care of themselves and their families, digging deeper into this topic in IM5 showed us the impact that poverty has on children and their health/development. I knew poverty played a part in an individual's access to healthcare and stress level (that can cause illness), but I did not realize how much it put all body systems at risk. The more exposure to ACEs or adverse childhood experiences the more at risk a person becomes. These adverse childhood experiences include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; parental separation/divorce/domestic abuse; parental mental illness, substance dependence, incarceration; or physical and emotional neglect.

Answering "yes" to the question means you receive one point, higher the number the worse the individual's health outcomes. Some examples Dr. Burke gave were COPD and hepatitis, chances being two and a half that of someone with zero ACEs score, depression was four and a half times more likely, and suicidality was twelve times. As the ACE score reached past 7 or more the individual becomes triple at risk for lung cancer and half times the risk for heart disease. It is crazy to me how much our environment and upbringing has an effect on every part of us, both physically and mentally. Some of these tedtalks are just motivational insight on topics but I really like how Dr. Burke referenced scientific research and brought it down to laymen terms when describing the reason why this happens. Early adversity affects the nucleus accumbens which controls the pleasure-reward circuit of the body, the prefrontal cortex is inhibited which controls impulse and function- required for learning, and on MRI scans, there is a significant difference in the amygdala which is the brains fear response center. She explains in an "fear of the bear" situation how when are repeatedly exposed to this stress activating stimulus then it goes from being lifesaving and adapting to maladaptive and health damaging.

I think as a future medical professional it is important to understand your patient and their background to effectively care for them. This activity will help me in understanding the different

effects poverty can have on the body system, ranging from their immune system and developing hormonal systems to their brain structure and function. The actions of those involved in a child's life play a big role in their development and outcome of the child and their community. We know that the child's brain is developed over time and is shaped by experiences of life, involving parents, family, and caregivers of all kinds. When this healthy brain development is disrupted by adversity in life, the brain architecture and behavior are more difficult to change (and gets harder with age). Education on adverse childhood experiences will be a big part of my practice as well. Educating the parents about the impacts of ACEs and the way toxic stress effects their child is just as important as teaching the basics to safety, poisoning, and diseases that require lifelong intervention. Recognizing where your patients ACEs score is at will allow for a more in-depth assessment and treatment plan when you understand the risks your patient is now at because of it. Compliance was not mentioned in the videos we watched but I would like to see Dr. Burkes take on the compliance of individuals with increase adversity when it comes to hospitalization and medical treatment. Using my background knowledge and what I learned today from these videos, I would have to assume that compliancy with treatment probably isn't the same to that of someone with an ACEs score of zero. Medications and doctors' appointments are expensive, with or without insurance, and then factoring in the time off work, paid or unpaid, can become nearly impossible for a family that is already struggling.