



PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH 2021-2022

For APA BOT Meeting on 10-16-2021



Vivian Pender, MD
President



Dilip Jeste, MD
Chairperson

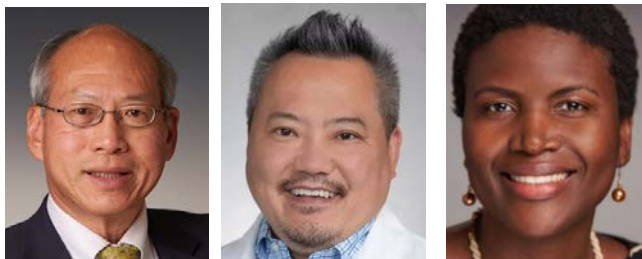
April/May: Task Force established; Call for nominations for appointments

June: Task Force Chair and members appointed and begin meeting monthly

Task Force Charge

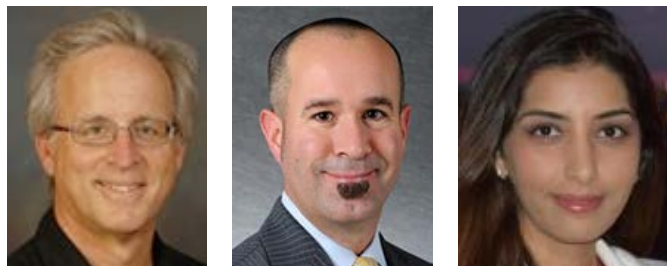
- Build on the 2018 APA Position Statement on Mental Health Equity & the Social and Structural Determinants of Mental Health, and 2020-21 APA Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism
- Develop evidence-based pragmatic strategies that may be used by clinicians, teachers, researchers, and administrators to assess SDoMH and improve individual and community well-being

Clinical Workgroup



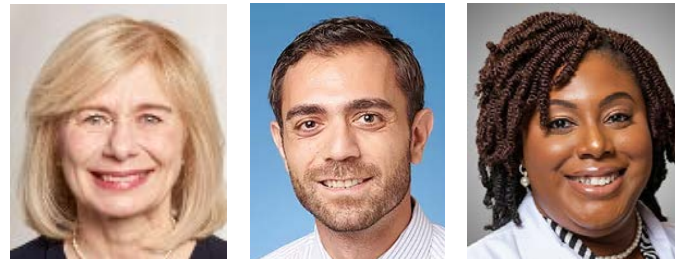
Francis Lu, MD (Chair), Steve Koh, MD, Tresha Gibbs, MD

Public Health Workgroup



Kenneth Thompson, MD (Chair), Michael Compton, MD, Sanya Virani, MD

Research & Education Workgroup



Dolores Malaspina, MD (Chair), Elie Aoun, MD, Kimberly Gordon-Achebe, MD

Policy Workgroup



Allan Tasman, MD (Chair), Gary Belkin, MD, Lisa Fortuna, MD

Consultants



Saul Levin, MD, MPA
CEO and Medical Director



Regina James, MD
Chief, Division of Diversity and
Health Equity; Deputy Medical
Director

Staff



Yoshie Davison, MSW
Chief of Staff



Ricardo A. Juarez, MS
Director, District Branch and
International Relations

- **Clinical:** Clinical competency; Practice Guidelines
- **Research and Education:** Bio-psycho-social studies of mechanisms & interventions; Training in SDoMH
- **Public Health:** Public education; Prevention
- **Policy:** Advocacy, Healthcare access; Healthcare economics



www.psychiatry.org/socialdeterminantsofmentalhealth

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Addressing Social Determinants of Mental Health

BY VIVIAN B. FENDER, M.D.

According to the World Health Organization, “A person’s mental health and many common mental disorders are shaped



by various social environments. In many countries, heavily associated with, whereby the high in other word itly start with or resources factors further that our psy from biopsych that could ha five place. As psychi treat mental an individual the silene aware of the l that illness or treat. This aware as the social and for us th mental health

Social Determinants of Mental Health as Mediators and Moderators of the Mental Health Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Francesco Bernardini, M.D., Luigi Attanero, M.D., Merri Rottar, M.D., Michael T. Compton, M.D., M.P.H.

Contrasting COVID-19, being exposed to it, or being affected by social determinants of health. Preventing social determinants of mental health. Impacts, and the social determinants of mental health. Impacts, and the social determinants of mental health. Impacts, and the social determinants of mental health.

Addressing the Social Determinants of Mental Health: If Not Now, When? If Not Us, Who?

Ruth S. Shim, M.D., M.P.H., and Michael T. Compton, M.D., M.P.H.

In public health, recognition of the importance of the social determinants of health has led to significant shifts in practice and research. Psychiatry is making great progress in developing evidence-based, high-fidelity treatments that improve outcomes for patients who have access to high-quality mental health care. But for the less fortunate, waiting further upstream, long before these mental health problems occur, is just as important as advancing new treatments. “Treating” the social determinants of mental health involves focusing more on policies than on medication, therapy, and

neurobiological innovation. It entails creating public policies that improve these issues and changing social norms to place greater value on giving everyone an equal chance at living a fulfilling and healthy life. Local, state, and federal governments set policies, and the psychiatric field has considerable power in influencing those policies and shaping the social norms that inform them. This new column offers a forum to discuss these issues.

Psychiatry Services 2018; 66:844–846. doi: 10.1093/psp/psy0300003

In the past decade, references in the scientific literature to the social determinants of health have increased by almost 2,000%. Social determinants have become a significant focus of many organizations and initiatives, including Healthy People 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (IOM). In public health circles, recognition of the importance of the social determinants—which are defined as “the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age”—has led to a significant shift in practice and research (2). The groundbreaking WHO report *Close the Gap in a Generation* highlights

that they are among mothers who are food secure, and the children of food-insecure mothers have higher rates of behavioral problems compared with children of food-secure mothers (6). Racism is strongly associated with poor mental health—major depression and posttraumatic stress disorder, in particular (7). Taken together, the evidence underscores that social determinants are key factors in the development, severity, and chronicity of mental and substance use disorders.

Effective solutions to address the social determinants of mental health exist. Investments in programs that improve the likelihood that children live in safe, secure, and healthy

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Mental Health Equity and the Social and Structural Determinants of Mental Health

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2018
Approved by the Assembly, November 2018

*Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . . . —APA Operations Manual

APA Resource Document

Resource Document on Social Determinants of Health

Approved by the Joint Reference Committee, June 2020

*The findings, opinions, and conclusions of this report do not necessarily represent the views of the office trustees, or all members of the American Psychiatric Association. Views expressed are those of the author —APA Operations Manual.

Prepared by Ole Thienhaus, MD, MBA (Chair), Laura Halpin, MD, PhD, Kunmi Sobowale, MD, Robert Trestman, PhD, MD

Preamble: The relevance of social and structural factors (see Appendix 1) to health, quality of life, and life expectancy has been amply documented and extends to mental health. Pertinent variables include the following (Compton & Shim, 2015):

- Discrimination, racism, and social exclusion
- Adverse early life experiences
- Poor education
- Unemployment, underemployment, and job insecurity
- Income inequality
- Poverty
- Neighborhood deprivation
- Food insecurity
- Poor housing quality and housing instability
- Poor access to mental health care

All of these variables impede access to care, which is critical to individual health, and the attainment of social equity. These are essential to the pursuit of happiness, described in this country’s founding

VIEWPOINT

The Role of Physicians in Addressing Social Determinants of Health

Nelson Maani, PhD
Boston University
School of Public Health,
Boston, Massachusetts;
and London School of
Hygiene and Tropical
Medicine, London,
England.

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DPhil
Boston University
School of Public Health,
Boston, Massachusetts.

To a large degree, health is shaped by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, collectively termed the social determinants of health.^{1,2}

US public and health care professionals care about improving health outcomes. Compared with other high-income countries, the US spends significantly more per capita and in total on health care.³ Yet through chronic underinvestment in some of the conditions that most influence health, such as social services, education, physical environments, and access to healthy food, progress has been undermined, with lower-than-average outcomes across a range of health indicators, including a recent decline in life expectancy.

tion with the often-demoralizing alternative: treating people only to send them back to the conditions that contributed to their health problems.

Efforts to address these issues are also reflected in the literature. In a recent series of articles, physicians were encouraged to interpret health issues from a social determinants perspective.⁴ The suggestion underpinning such initiatives, however, often was that once social determinants are “diagnosed,” these powerful influences can be attended to by practitioners and clinical-service organizations.

This is, however, far easier said than done. Many fundamental determinants of health are far upstream



Social Determinants of Health

What are social determinants of health?

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

SDOH can be grouped into 5 domains:



Download SDOH graphic (141.29 KB)

Suggested citation

- 6th to 4th century BCE: Ancient Greeks considered physical & social determinants of health and recognized the importance of supportive environments and of healthy public policy (Tountas, 2009)
- Early 19th century: Social disconnectedness increased with industrial revolution
- 1840: “If medicine is to fulfill her great task, then she must enter the political and social life. Do we not always find the diseases of the populace traceable to defects in society?” – R. Virchow
- 1946: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.” – WHO
- 1998: Wilkinson RG, Marmot M, & World Health Organization: The solid facts: Social Determinants of Health. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (WHO, 2002)

- Early childhood development
- Education, job opportunities, and income
- Social inclusion and freedom from racial & other forms of discrimination
- Safe housing, transportation, neighborhoods
- Access to clean air and water
- Access to nutritious foods & physical activity opportunities
- Access to decent-quality affordable health services

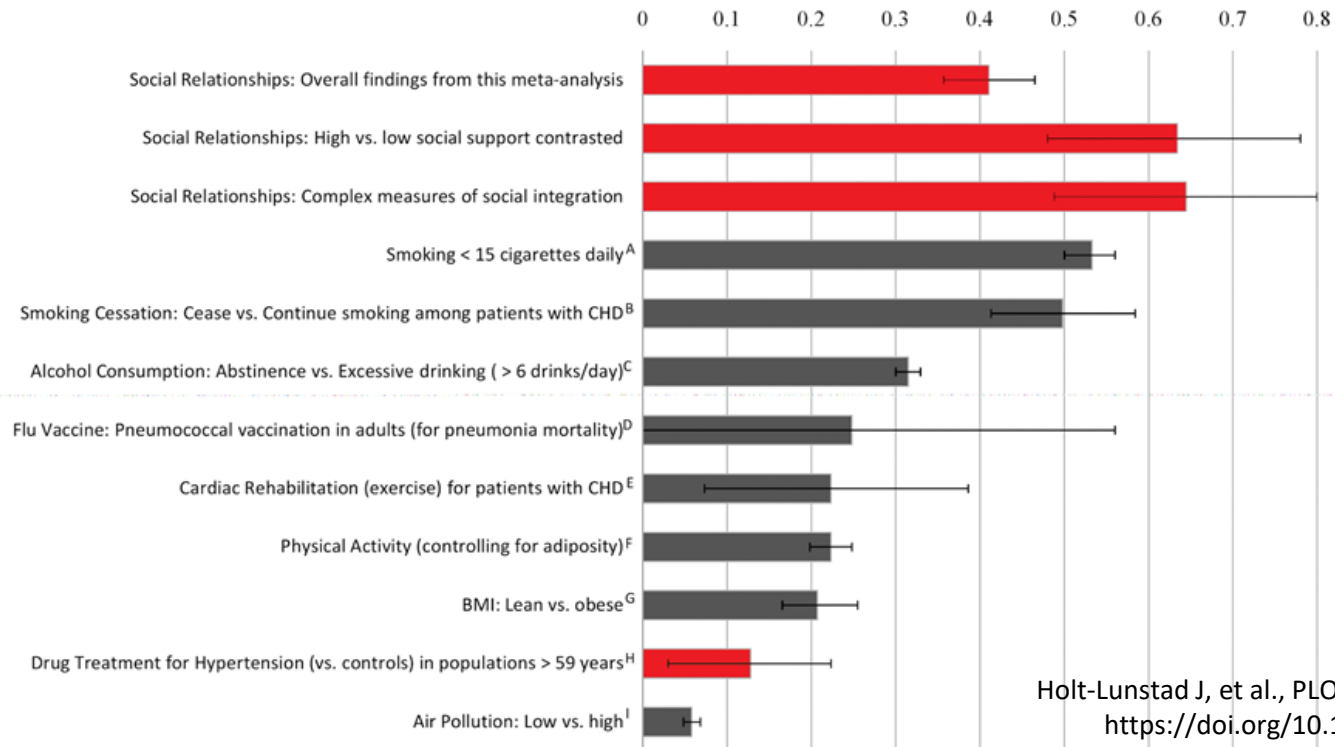


- Exposure to the Impacts of Global Climate Change
- Exposure to Conflict, Violence, Shootings, War, Migration, etc.
- Interaction and Involvement with the Criminal Justice System
- Adverse Features of the Built Environment



Compton and Shim, 2020

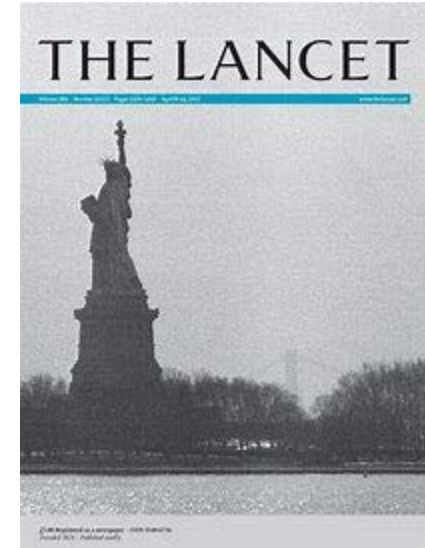
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: ODDS OF REDUCED MORTALITY



Holt-Lunstad J, et al., PLOS Medicine 7(7): e1000316, 2010.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316>

- 75% of SMI begin in early life – hence, there is more adverse impact of SDoH in SMI patients than in non-SMI persons
- More people with SMI are in jails/prisons than in hospitals
- Mortality gap between SMI and general population has increased in recent years, likely due to continued marginalization of SMI patients

Vivian Pender, the newly elected President of the APA pronounced in July that “we need to be more aware of the broader context in which (mental) illness occurred and how that context has shaped the health outcome.” Pender has felt the need to create a taskforce to examine this issue, reporting to the APA’s annual meeting in May, 2022..... Much evidence has been published supporting Pender’s call for social determinants to be considered as key in understanding and treating mental illness.



The Lancet, Vol 398 September 18, 2021, www.thelancet.com

- Stigma against mental illnesses
- Healthcare inequities for psychiatric patients
- Structural & functional milieu – Quality of education & opportunities
- Criminal justice system
- Quality of Social connections (including Social media)
- Positive psychosocial factors: Community-level Resilience, Compassion, Wisdom

- Assessment of SDoMH in clinical practice
- Identification of social causes of health inequities in individual patients
- Focus on Social Prescribing



- SDoMH is a unique construct that is distinct from (though with some overlap with) general SDoH
- APA's proposed work on SDoMH is generating wide interest outside APA
- We must focus on pragmatic but evidence-based strategies