

Black Lives Matter and Nursing in America

A history of Medical Apartheid and the evolution of racism and inequity in healthcare

1800s



James Marion Sims

The "father of modern gynecology", created his surgical techniques to help women through difficult childbirth by operating on enslaved Black women without anesthesia. In 2018, a statue of Sims was removed from Central Park; however, memorials still remain in the south.



Civil War

Black soldiers were segregated to understaffed, under-resourced wards for wounded soldiers.



W.E.B DuBois

In his book "The Philadelphia Negro" published in 1899, he countered the case for scientific racism that Samuel George Morton made in "Crania Americana" arguing instead that differences in health outcomes for blacks and whites had more to do with social determinants of health than genetics.

1900s



Sterilization

Expanded sterilization laws in 1913 allowed physicians more leeway resulting in the sterilization of Black Americans at 4 times the rate of Whites.

1950s



Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment

In 1932, US Public Health Service conducted the Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male, withholding life-saving treatment to the unaware participants.



Human Radiation Experiment

In 1945, a Black man named Ebb Cade died of complications after, without consent, becoming the first subject in the Human Radiation experiment in Tennessee after being admitted for multiple bone fractures.

Henrietta Lacks

When Henrietta Lacks, a 31-year-old Black mother of five from Virginia, died of cervical cancer in 1951, her cancer cells were removed without permission to be used for research. Her uniquely "immortal" cells quickly became perhaps the most vital cell lines in the history of medical research – specially for Polio, cancer and AIDS cures – being used to study toxicities and treatment without experimenting on humans.



Civil Rights Movement

Abolitionists' and activists' efforts pioneers legislation – the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Bill, and passage of Medicare and Medicaid – leading to hospital desegregation and health equity improvements.

2000



Flint, MI

A majority Black city – switches water supply to Flint River as a cost-saving measure which results in a public health crisis and violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act because of lead-poisoned water.



Maternity Death Rates Disparity

Data is released by the National Center for Health Statistics show that Black women die 2.5 times more often than white women.

2020



COVID-19 Outcomes Disparity

According to the CDC, the "long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put some members of racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting COVID-19 or experiencing severe illness, regardless of age. Among some racial and ethnic minority groups, including non-Hispanic black persons, Hispanics and Latinos, and American Indians/Alaska Natives, evidence points to higher rates of hospitalization or death from COVID-19 than among non-Hispanic white persons."

Racism in Nursing: Prejudice and discrimination in nursing and within the medical and healthcare systems based upon perceived race or ethnicity. Racism in healthcare can manifest itself in four major ways: **racial discrimination** resulting in differential health treatment, conceptual **ideas of race**, the experience of **racism negatively impacting one's health**, and **institutional racism**.

What is BLM: #BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. It is a multi-national organization whose mission is to **eradicate white supremacy** and **build local power** to intervene in violence inflicted on black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and **centering Black joy**, we win immediate improvements in our lives.

All 50 States and at least 18 countries participated in the BLM protests - making it the largest civil rights movement in history

Resources and Non-profits:

Equal Justice Initiative
The Loveland Foundation
ACLU
NAACP
BET & United Way COVID-19 Fund
White Coats for Black Lives
NYC Action Medical
Color of Change

Race is

a non-biological, **socially constructed** category - defined by physical markers - which **informs and impacts** one's walk in the material world. Statistics about race are not about skin color and biology, but rather about social determinants of health

Social Justice Determines

Social Determinants of Health:

Economic Stability
Housing & Neighborhood
Education
Nutrition Access
Healthcare Access
Employment Status
Immigration Status
Community Supports
Social Context



"No one becomes 'not racist,' despite a tendency by Americans to identify themselves that way. We can only strive to be anti-racist on a daily basis."

Ibram X Kendi

Questions to ask yourself and your workplace: Have you ever been in a room where nobody looked like you? Where everyone looked like you? **Does your workplace reflect** the community it exists in or the population it serves? **Can you think of a time when you may have done something racist**, consciously or unconsciously? **How can you educate yourself** on the historical context of race? Do you have **the language to speak up** when you hear racism? What are some examples of ways you can **be an active agent of change** in your community?