



January 19, 2023

Road Map Bulletin: Disparities in How Lack of Access Contributes to Vision Health Disparities

Happy Thursday, Mount Sinai Community—

Before we delve into this week's Bulletin topic, we wanted to acknowledge two important events this week. On Monday, we observed [Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#), celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. King and his work toward a better future for all. We also want to wish a happy [Lunar New Year](#) to all who will be celebrating this multi-day festivity that kicks off on Saturday, January 22! Visit [Mount Sinai Daily](#) for information on celebrating at sites across Mount Sinai.

This week, as a follow up to some of our past bulletins on health [disparities](#) and [vision](#), we wanted to share new research from [Journal of the American Medical Association \(JAMA\) Ophthalmology](#) which found that a lack of access to vision care services has contributed to vision disparities among Black, Hispanic, and poorer adolescents.

The study found that approximately 16 percent of Black adolescents and 18 percent of Mexican American adolescents had worse than 20/40 vision—compared to just 7 percent of white adolescents. This stunning difference is especially important because it was identified during young people's formative developmental years, when they rely on their eyesight to learn.

A few months ago, we shared a [Bulletin](#) on the ways in which our colleagues at New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai (NYEE) are working to advance health equity through research in vision screening and care, which goes hand in hand with what this JAMA report highlights.



In August, **Tamiesha Frempong, MD, MPH**, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, Medical Education, and Pediatrics for the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, shared that, “the benefits of studies like [this](#) are being able to raise awareness among health care providers and hospital administrators about differences in outcomes, disease burden, and severity by race.”

While data collection and analysis like this is complex, studies like those at NYEE and by the researchers cited in JAMA can uncover why structural and persistent disparities exist—helping us dismantle them in the process. As research on these topics progresses, we are hopeful experts will begin to uncover answers to further questions like: what treatments and practices can be implemented to eliminate these disparities and how can we make said treatments accessible for everyone?

Examining the ways in which the health of individuals and groups is impacted by factors like race, environment, genetics, and socioeconomic status allows us to understand these disparities. With a full 360-degree view of those most at risk for health issues and the barriers to care they face, we can begin to course-correct and build a system that best serves all patients. This work, and that of our colleagues at other institutions, is invaluable to our efforts to create more equity in health care.

All the best,
Angela and Shawn

Join Us for an Upcoming Event

Observing the Lunar New Year at Mount Sinai

Join Mount Sinai in celebrating the Lunar New Year. All hospital locations will hold tabling events during the week of Monday, January 23. Visit [Mount Sinai Daily](#) to see the details for your site. You may need to login with your Mount Sinai email and password.

Chats for Change: Racism x Immigration—Chats for Change is a production of the Icahn School of Medicine’s Racism and Bias Initiative. Join **Ann-Gel Palermo, DrPH** and **Alia Barnes, MPH** on Tuesday, January 24 from Noon - 1 pm to explore the subtle ways tokenism can give those in power the appearance of being non-racist and even champions of diversity. [Register on Zoom.](#)

[Road Map for Action](#)

[Past Bulletins](#)