1st World Congress on Migration, Ethnicity, Race, and Health
"Tools for Naming and Addressing Racism and Other Systems of Structured Inequity"
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Health equity is assurance of the conditions for optimal health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing all individuals and populations equally, recognizing and rectifying historical injustices, and providing resources according to need. Health disparities will be eliminated when health equity is achieved.

"Race"-associated differences in health outcomes in the United States are well-documented, widespread across organ systems, evident throughout the life course, and persistent over generations. Yet the study of these "racial health disparities" has long remained a simple documentation of differences, rather than a vigorous investigation of the root causes of the differences. To fully understand these differences and then to act, we must shift from a focus on "race" to a focus on racism.

Racism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call "race"), that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources.

This definition of racism can be generalized to be a definition of any system of structured inequity. For example, sexism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on gender, that unfairly disadvantages some, unfairly advantages others, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources.

The author shares communication tools for naming and addressing racism and other systems of structured inequity. The Cliff Analogy elucidates three dimensions of health intervention: health services, addressing social determinants of health, addressing social determinants of equity. The Gardener's Tale illustrates three levels of racism: institutionalized, personally-mediated, internalized. Dual Reality sparks recognition of systems of structured inequity. Moving to Action inspires us to name racism, ask "How is racism operating here?", and organize and strategize to act.