

Emerging Issues and Trends in Women's Health

Women's Health Initiatives researches, monitors and reports on emerging trends in women's health. The following selections are brief summaries of trending health issues, including: Adverse Childhood Experiences, the heroin epidemic, long-lasting menopause symptoms and social determinates of health.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES: EARLY LIFE EVENTS THAT CAN DAMAGE OUR ADULT HEALTH

According to The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "traumatic childhood events like abuse and neglect can create dangerous levels of stress and derail healthy brain development resulting in long-term effects on learning, behavior and health. A growing network of leaders in research, policy and practice are leading the way in preventing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and mitigating their impact through building resilience."

STUDY

The ACEs Study is one of the largest investigations ever conducted to assess associations between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being. The study is a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente's Health Appraisal Clinic in San Diego. More than 17,000 Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) members undergoing a comprehensive physical examination chose to provide detailed information about their childhood experience of abuse, neglect, and family dysfunction.

The ACE Study findings suggest that certain experiences are major risk factors for the leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life in the United States. It is critical to understand how some of the worst health and social problems in our nation can arise as a consequence of adverse childhood experiences. Realizing these connections is likely to improve efforts towards prevention and recovery.

SOURCE: CDC: Division of Violence Prevention (LINK)



ACEs and NEBRASKA

According to The Nebraska Pregnancy Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) stress on mothers can seriously contribute to ACEs in their children. Issues such as substance abuse or physical abuse can lead to poor health for both mothers and children.

PRAMS 2011 data shows:

- 7 out of 10 Nebraska mothers report one or more stressful situations
- 1 out of 10 Nebraska mothers report depression or sadness

Stressors asked about in the PRAMS Survey:

- Problems with alcohol or drug use
- Separation or divorce from husband or partner
- Incarceration of husband or partner
- Physical abuse
- Depression

PRAMS ACEs Infographic

http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/ACEs_Fact_Sheet.pdf

HEROIN EPIDEMIC

According to the CDC, heroin use among women has doubled in the span of 10 years. Heroin use has increased across the U.S. among most age groups, and all income levels. Some of the greatest increases occurred in demographic groups with historically low rates of heroin use: women, the privately insured, and people with higher incomes. Not only are people using heroin, they are also abusing multiple other substances, especially cocaine and prescription opioid painkillers. As heroin use has increased, so have heroin-related overdose deaths. Between 2002 and 2013, the rate of heroin-related overdose deaths nearly quadrupled, and more than 8,200 people died in 2013. States play a central role in prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts for this growing epidemic. SOURCE: <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/heroin/>



MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS LAST LONGER THAN REALIZED

Vasomotor symptoms (VMS) are the most common symptoms of the menopausal transition. Previous research has given widely disparate estimations on the duration of VMS, but a current study from the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology suggests that most women experience VMS for six months to two years, however, some research, particularly studies that include younger women and higher proportions of racial and ethnic minorities, has demonstrated a substantially longer mean duration of VMS. According to a study published in JAMA Internal Medicine (02/16/2015), the longest duration of VMS occurred among black women. The study found that longer VMS duration was associated with younger age, lower educational level, smoking, stress and depression. The duration of VMS affects healthcare decisions, such as when to begin hormone replacement therapy. SOURCES: Medscape: Vasomotor Menopausal Symptoms Last Longer than Realized, Authors: Lewis, PhD and Vega, MD; JAMA International Medicine (02/16/2015).

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) science-based health objectives campaign, *Healthy People 2020* has defined, "Social Determinants of Health" (SDOH) as conditions in the environments in which 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. The five key determinants identified by the CDC include:

- Economic Stability
- Education
- Social and Community Context
- Health and Health Care
- Neighborhood and Built Environment

These key determinates frame social and physical environments that promote good health for all. To ensure that all Americans have access to good health, advances are needed not only in health care but also in fields such as education, childcare, housing, business, law, media, community planning, transportation, and agriculture. Making these advances involves working together to:

- Explore how programs, practices, and policies in these areas affect the health of individuals, families, and communities.
- Establish common goals, complementary roles, and ongoing constructive relationships between the health sector and these areas.
- Maximize opportunities for collaboration among federal, state, and local-level partners related to social determinants of health. SOURCE: HealthyPeople.gov <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health>

