

Paving the way to healthcare equity: Raising awareness of existing gaps in the dermatologic care of diverse populations in the United States

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METHODOLOGY

- Literature Search**
PubMed Search included English language articles published in the US between January 2020–April 2022 and specific search term combinations related to subpopulations, indications, and stakeholders
- Review and Analysis**
Search results yielded 70 high-priority articles, from which care gaps were extracted and categorized into four fundamental root causes
- Literature Prioritization**
Titles and abstracts of the resulting articles were screened for their significance to populations with SOC (high-, mid-, or low-priority). *High-priority* articles had a high degree of relevance to SOC care; *medium-priority* articles were inconclusive; *low-priority* articles were not relevant to SOC care
- Summary Map**
17 distinct care gaps were mapped based on need category and targeted stakeholders. Study findings were validated by expert thought leaders

BACKGROUND

The field of dermatology has long recognized the heterogeneity of clinical manifestations, disease burden, and management approaches across diverse populations. Nonetheless, a comprehensive overview of existing care gaps is lacking

OBJECTIVE

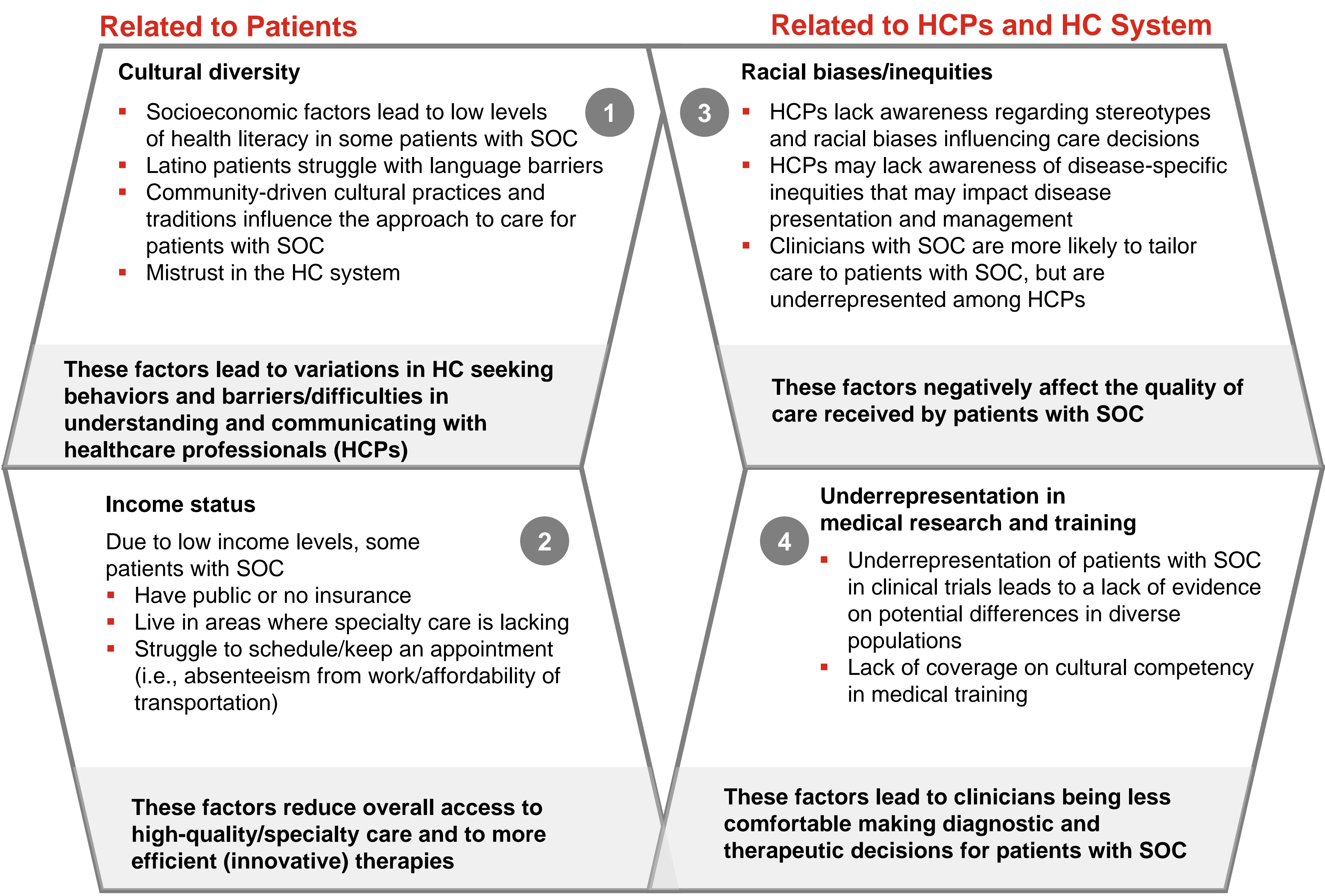
Despite growing awareness of the disparities in dermatologic health outcomes among populations with skin of color (SOC) in the United States (US), there is a need to synthesize the current literature to facilitate evidence-based decision-making, guide future initiatives, and ultimately, achieve healthcare (HC) equity

CONCLUSIONS

Although numerous initiatives have sought to address the disparities in dermatologic health outcomes across diverse populations in the US, there is a need for more targeted, empirically-rooted engagement
 To provide optimal care for patients of all backgrounds, understanding the factors that contribute to these incongruities is a crucial step towards the development of potential solutions
 This study aims to inspire future initiatives by evaluating existing care gaps in dermatology and proposing a structured framework for periodic assessment of the outcomes attained from these actions

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RESULTS – PROPOSED ROOT CAUSES OF CARE GAPS



RESULTS – PROPOSED CARE GAPS

1	Ineffective patient education materials due to language complexity and absence of non-English versions, hindering comprehension and accessibility	Insufficient adaptation of patient communication by HCPs to match the health literacy level of patients	Insufficient HCP awareness of cultural norms affecting physical examinations
	Limited patient awareness on skin disease causes and presentation among patients with SOC, leading to reduced knowledge about the necessity of seeking specialist care	Absence of culturally safe patient education channels to acquire greater trust in the HC system	
2	Inadequate insurance coverage restricts guideline-recommended therapy, resulting in poorer outcomes	Inadequate access to dermatological care in areas with high density of patients with SOC, compounded by appointment difficulties due to work constraints and transportation costs	
		Limited efforts to address prevailing stereotypes in the dermatological care of patients with SOC	
3	Shortage of dermatologists serving underrepresented patient populations		
4	Scarcity of images in dermatology medical textbooks and existing HCP literature of patients with SOC	Limited information in medical curriculum addressing patients with SOC	Limited HCP awareness regarding medical journey of patients with SOC and a lack of knowledge among dermatologists about disease-specific inequities that may influence their clinical practice
	Insufficient efforts to enhance care delivery and SOC research , and minimal support for the establishment of new centers of excellence	Existing classification scales are not inclusive of diverse patient skin types	Limited understanding of immunological variations, phenotype differences, and biomarkers among diverse populations
	Insufficient representation of patients with SOC in clinical trials	Insufficient research and data on post-inflammatory hyper-/hypopigmentation resulting from disease or therapy	

Legend:
 Need Category: Education (Pink), Research (Grey), Access/System (Light Green)
 Targeted Stakeholders: D (Dermatologists), P (Patients), R (Residents), R (Researchers), CG (Caregivers)

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