**Population Health, Part 1: Healthcare-Associated Infections**

Healthcare-associated infections are a significant issue in the United States healthcare system due to the poor quality of care. Measures of population health such as life expectancy and mortality prove that the quality of care in the U.S. is worse than in other developed countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany (National Research Council, & Committee on Population, 2013). Thus, healthcare-associated infections directly relate to the poor quality of care in the healthcare system of the country. Population health determinants – access to health care, individual behavior, social environment, physical environment, and genetics – affect healthcare-associated infections in different ways.

With limited access to healthcare, the health conditions of patients already undergoing treatment continue to worsen as they crave for medical attention. Individual behavior as a determinant has little to do with healthcare-associated infections since patients are often less informed on what to do regarding treatment. Similarly, social environment has a lot to do with patients regarding how they relate with others while still undergoing care and less to do with physicians. However, the manner in which doctors refer to patients can influence their health outcomes. Doctors seem to care less about what patients think or want hence the poor quality of care (Mosadeghrad, 2014). Also, the hygiene of the physical environment is the responsibility or clinicians. An unconducive or unhygienic physical environment can lead to healthcare-associated infections. Finally, there is little impact of the genetics of healthcare-associated infections since genetic infections are inherent. However, failure to control genetic infections during treatment can still contribute towards the prevalence of healthcare-associated infections. Above all, access to care is the most impactful determinant for healthcare-associated infections since most patients need the healthcare attention they never get.

According to "HAI Data and Statistics | HAI | CDC" (2018), the prevalence of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) is statistically justified. Through epidemiological data, it is evident that that “On any given day, about one in 25 hospital patients has at least one healthcare-associated infection.” ("HAI Data and Statistics | HAI | CDC," 2018: par 2). The epidemiological data has played a critical role in designing population health measures and policy initiatives by revealing the level of damage or how bad HAIs have become. Addressing determinants through epidemiological data is equivalent to solving the overall population health concerns (Healthypeople.gov, 2010). Therefore, such information is being used to improve the quality of care and the United States healthcare system at large.

**References**

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