

Culturally-Responsive Whole Health for Veterans:
Mapping Social Determinants of Health onto the Functional Medicine Matrix

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Introduction: Social determinants of health (SDH), which drive health inequities, include factors such as employment, social exclusion, housing, ethnicity, gender, child development, globalization, urbanization, and health systems (World Health Organization, n.d.). A person's lifetime experiences, including military service, may contribute to unfavorable SDH that adversely impact their health.

The functional medicine (FM) matrix provides a holistic framework that can be used to incorporate SDH into individualized care. This project aims to map SDH onto the FM matrix in order to expand the matrix to more fully respond to diverse health care needs in a multicultural society inclusive of veterans.

Results: We present a model for applying SDH to the FM matrix, demonstrating that SDH extend beyond the realm of lifestyle factors and map onto all aspects of the FM physiology and function nodes that manifest as clinical imbalances. Using illustrative examples from research literature and a case example from our clinical experience in post-deployment health, we show that incorporating SDH into the FM matrix improves holistic care for veterans.

Discussion: In a world of health care disparities, incorporating SDH into the FM matrix provides opportunities for more responsive, ethical, and individualized whole health care.

Reference

World Health Organization (n.d.). *Social determinants of health*.
<https://www.who.int/social-determinants/en/>

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current word count = 250)