Understanding the Scope and Impact of Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) in Biomarker Testing

Pursuing appropriate access to biomarker testing in oncology

Why SDoH Matter

SDoH are the specific conditions in which people are born and live their lives[1,2]:

Physical[1,3] **Educational**[1,4] **Medical**[1,5] **Financial**[1,6] **Social**[1,7]

Other factors that may influence health include race or ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic class, and sexual orientation.[1,2,8,9]

For example, these populations may experience worse outcomes, regardless of cancer stage at diagnosis

Black men and women[10]

People living in rural areas[11]

People with lower income and education levels[12]

This is tied to social, economic, and environmental factors, so addressing SDoH helps to achieve healthcare equity[2,8,9]

SDoH and Biomarker Testing

Biomarker testing helps oncologists to diagnose cancer and establish treatment eligibility by:

Identifying tumor markers such as genes and proteins to more precisely analyze a patient's cancer[13,14]

Informing treatment decisions[13,14]
Testing may give oncologists a more accurate sense of whether a treatment may be appropriate for a given patient[14]

Differences in access to biomarker testing may lead to disparities in health outcomes[15]

For example:

An academic vs a community care setting may impact the likelihoood of guideline-aligned biomarker testing among patients with metastatic colon cancer[16]

Hispanic and Black patients with lung cancer may not receive guideline-aligned biomarker testing as frequently as other populations[17]

Ideally, regardless of their SDoH, patients should receive appropriate biomarker testing to help inform treatment decisions.[15]

Mitigating the Impact of SDoH

Strategies for addressing SDoH include:

- Identify possible SDoH and document them in electronic health records[18,19]

- Connect patients with support that can help address disparities, such as patient advocates or local community resources[18,20-23]

- Analyze care critically and improve MDT coordination by applying communication strategies and technologies[22-26]

A collaborative and communicative multidisciplinary team (MDT) helps to address SDoH while working towards the goal of providing high quality care [22,27,28]

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