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The Upper East Side vs Central Harlem: What is responsible for the Dermatology Disparities that shaped these Communities?

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Abstract

Despite the paucity of dermatology practices in the Central Harlem (CH) community in Manhattan, very few studies have been done to understand this occurrence. This ecological study will identify factors such as, geographical location, race, socioeconomic status, health care and medical education, as reasons why there is a disparity between the dermatology services in the CH community versus the Upper East Side (UES) of Manhattan. From May to July 2019, the patient population in the Central Harlem dermatology practice, Uptown Dermatology, was observed and in this time frame 20 patients were seen at the site, during the research hours, which amounted to 60 patients a week. In this time patients would remark that their community lacked dermatology services. Thus, it was reasonable to hypothesize that there were social and health disparity factors that attributed to this sentiment among patients, and this project aimed to identify those contributing disparities.

Thus, examining the difference in the neighborhoods as a mediator, it is clear there is a need for increased dermatology practices to CH, as not catering to the clinical needs of a community can be detrimental to the public health and welfare of its residents. Therefore, initiatives like; improved medical education among dermatology residents, dermatology outreach, accepting public insurance plans in CH, incentives to open dermatology practices in CH and free dermatology clinics can be developed to help close this disparity gap.

