Identifying and Evaluating Industry Supported Educational Programs Aimed at Addressing the Social Determinants of Health

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Abstract. Education is one of the key social determinants of health that may be enhanced through technology industry initiatives that support the development of programs for underserviced populations. This poster will provide an overview of identified technology-industry supported educational programs aimed at addressing the social determinants of health. This information can help nursing leaders in the digital health and informatics space identify initiatives that lead to future partnerships.

Keywords. Health equity, digital health, education access, social determinants of health

1. Introduction

Education is one of the key social determinants of health that may be improved through enhanced access initiatives in underserviced populations [1] . Health equity is defined as the removal of barriers and the promotion of justice to assist individuals to reach their greatest health potential, such as through the promotion of health opportunities [2]. Leading technology companies have a unique opportunity to support efforts to address health inequities through the development of initiatives to enhance education access in underserviced communities and populations, and to meet their own corporate social responsibility objectives. These are often through digital and technology supported methods, which can be utilized during the global COVID-19 pandemic. This poster will provide an overview of the findings to date of an academic and grey literature review aimed at identified technology-industry supported educational programs that address the social determinants of health. It will also provide a critique of these programs and identify gaps that may exist.

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2. Methods

This poster provides the initial findings of an academic and grey literature review on this topic. A librarian was consulted in the development of the academic and grey literature search strategy. The academic literature review strategy involved searching four databases, including ProQuest, Ovid MEDLINE, Scopus, and CINAHL. This phase of the review is currently under way and will be completed in May of 2021. The grey literature search strategy involved scanning the New York Stock Exchange, The Toronto Stock Exchange, and iShares Exchange Traded Funds for relevant companies with a technology focus. A total of 368 companies were identified and searched manually through their websites and through Google and Million Short search engines. Most educational initiatives were identified through each company's corporate social responsibility page or the news section on their websites.

3. Results

Of the 368 companies that were searched, 19 had developed education-related programs to enhance health equity. From these 19 programs, various educational initiatives were targeted that involved specific technology literacy training and skill-based development, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs, digital academies with focused curriculums, and coding courses. Varying programs were targeted at global, national, and local levels. Programs targeted a variety of populations, including women, youth within underserviced communities, veterans, and people with disabilities. The poster will provide a comprehensive breakdown of each of the identified programs in the academic and grey literature review, their characteristics, and a critique of the efficacy of the programs. Implications for nursing leaders in digital health and informatics will be provided.

4. Conclusions

Identifying successful education programs that enhance health equity is crucial for understanding how to adapt future interventions to address the social determinants of health. Identifying how the technology industry is aiming to address this area of health equity is a viable solution to targeting other pertinent determinants of health. In addition, with challenging fiscal environments in which hospitals, clinics and health systems operate, partnering with technology companies may be one approach to addressing unmet needs of underserviced populations. Knowing what approaches work best to address these needs, and what needs to be considered to establish these partnerships is one way that nursing leaders in digital health and informatics can be effective in leading in this space. Future research can focus on the formal evaluation of these programs to understand their effectiveness in addressing barriers to health.

References

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