

# U.S. Health In International Perspective: Shorter Lives, Poorer Health

Institute of Medicine Report April 2013

ACP September 9, 2016

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

COLLEGE of  
ENGINEERING



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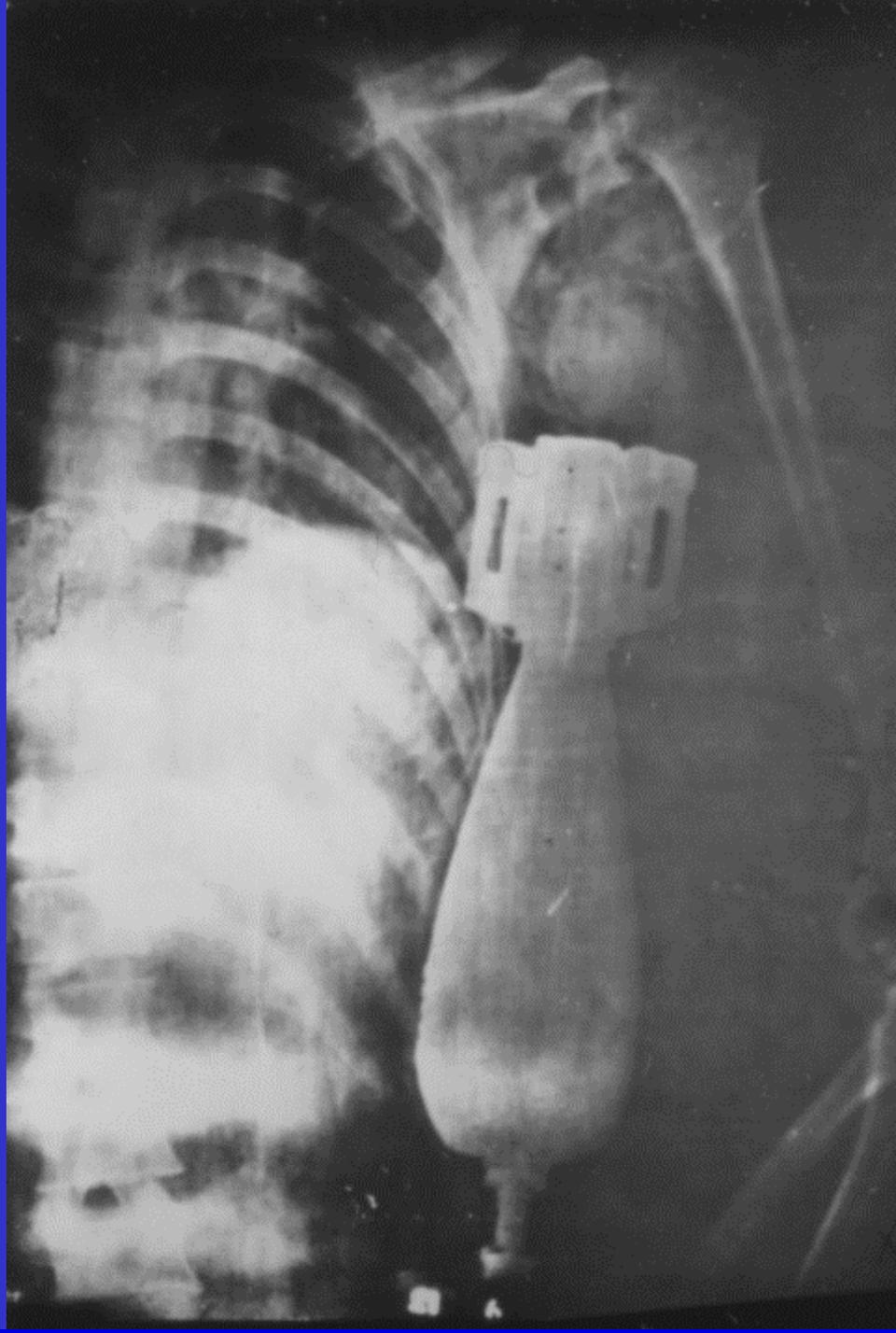
# Introduction

- Wealth vs. health
  - Americans live shorter lives and experience more injuries and illnesses than people in other high-income countries
  - 2011 report by National Research Council
    - American >50 have a slower pace in the increase of life expectancy than other high income countries
- U. S. spending per capita for health care
- NIH request to NRC and IOM

# National Academies

- **National Academy of Science**—distinguished scholars engaged in scientific and engineering research, dedicated to the furtherance of science and technology and to their use for the general welfare
- **National Academy of Engineering**—parallel organization of outstanding engineers
- **Institute of Medicine**—members of appropriate professions in the examination of policy matters pertaining to the health of the public
- **National Research Council**—working arm of the national academies--to associate the broad community of science and technology with the Academy's purposes of furthering knowledge and advising the federal government





# Formation of Panel

- **Panel on Understanding Cross-National Health Differences Among High-Income Countries**
  - Examine whether the U.S. health disadvantage exists across the life span, exploring potential explanations, and assessing the larger implications of the findings
- 16 comparable high income or “peer countries”

# Experts on the Panel

- Medicine
- Epidemiology
- Demography
- Other fields of Social Sciences

# Seventeen High-Income Countries Ranked by Life Expectancy (LE) at Birth, 2007

## Males

### Rank Country LE

|    |                      |              |
|----|----------------------|--------------|
| 1  | Switzerland          | 79.33        |
| 2  | Australia            | 79.27        |
| 3  | Japan                | 79.20        |
| 4  | Sweden               | 78.92        |
| 5  | Italy                | 78.82        |
| 6  | Canada               | 78.35        |
| 7  | Norway               | 78.25        |
| 8  | Netherlands          | 78.01        |
| 9  | Spain                | 77.62        |
| 10 | United Kingdom       | 77.43        |
| 11 | France               | 77.41        |
| 12 | Austria              | 77.33        |
| 13 | Germany              | 77.11        |
| 14 | Denmark              | 76.13        |
| 15 | Portugal             | 75.87        |
| 16 | Finland              | 75.86        |
| 17 | <b>United States</b> | <b>75.64</b> |

## Females

### Rank Country LE

|    |                      |              |
|----|----------------------|--------------|
| 1  | Japan                | 85.98        |
| 2  | France               | 84.43        |
| 3  | Switzerland          | 84.09        |
| 3  | Italy                | 84.09        |
| 5  | Spain                | 84.03        |
| 6  | Australia            | 83.78        |
| 7  | Canada               | 82.95        |
| 7  | Sweden               | 82.95        |
| 9  | Austria              | 82.86        |
| 9  | Finland              | 82.86        |
| 11 | Norway               | 82.68        |
| 12 | Germany              | 82.44        |
| 13 | Netherlands          | 82.31        |
| 14 | Portugal             | 82.19        |
| 15 | United Kingdom       | 81.68        |
| 16 | <b>United States</b> | <b>80.78</b> |
| 17 | Denmark              | 80.53        |



# U.S. Health disadvantage spans many types of illness and injury

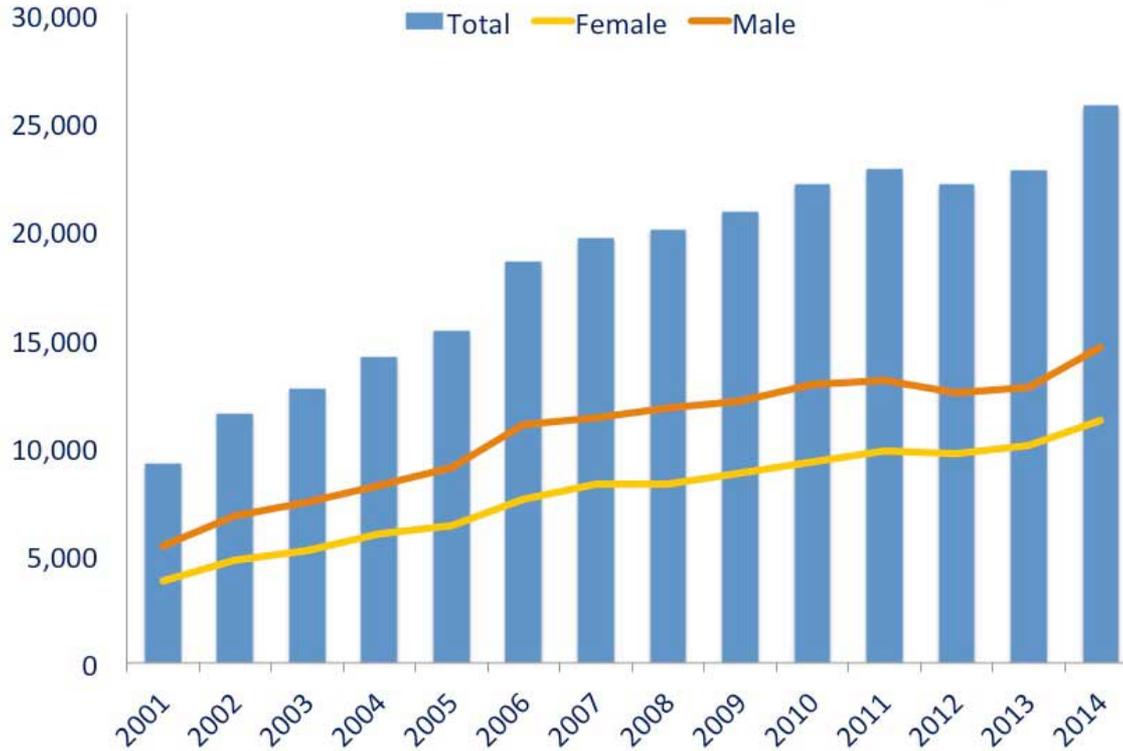
- **Infant mortality and low birth weight**
- **Injuries and homicides**
  - MVA, violence, especially in children and young adults
- **Adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections**
  - highest pregnancy rate and more likely to acquire STD
- **HIV and AIDS**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest prevalence of HIV, 1<sup>st</sup> -- incidence of AIDS
- **Drug-related deaths**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> drugs/ETOH (excluding DUI)





# National Overdose Deaths

## Number of Deaths from Prescription Drugs



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC Wonder

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/.../overdose>



# U.S. Health disadvantage spans many types of illness and injury

- **Obesity and diabetes**
  - #1 obesity rate, high prevalence rate in children
  - >age 20—highest prevalence rate of diabetes and blood glucose
- **Heart disease**
  - Death rate second highest
  - Reach age 50 with less favorable cardiovascular profile
- **Chronic lung disease**
  - More prevalent and associated with higher mortality
- **Disability**
  - older U.S. adults report higher prevalence of arthritis and activity limitations

# Age Related

- Deaths before age 50 are responsible for 2/3 of the difference in life expectancy between men in the U.S. and 1/3 for women compared to peer countries
- Since 1980, first or second lowest probability of surviving to age 50
- As adults, greater morbidity and mortality



# Mortality Rates in the U.S. 2010

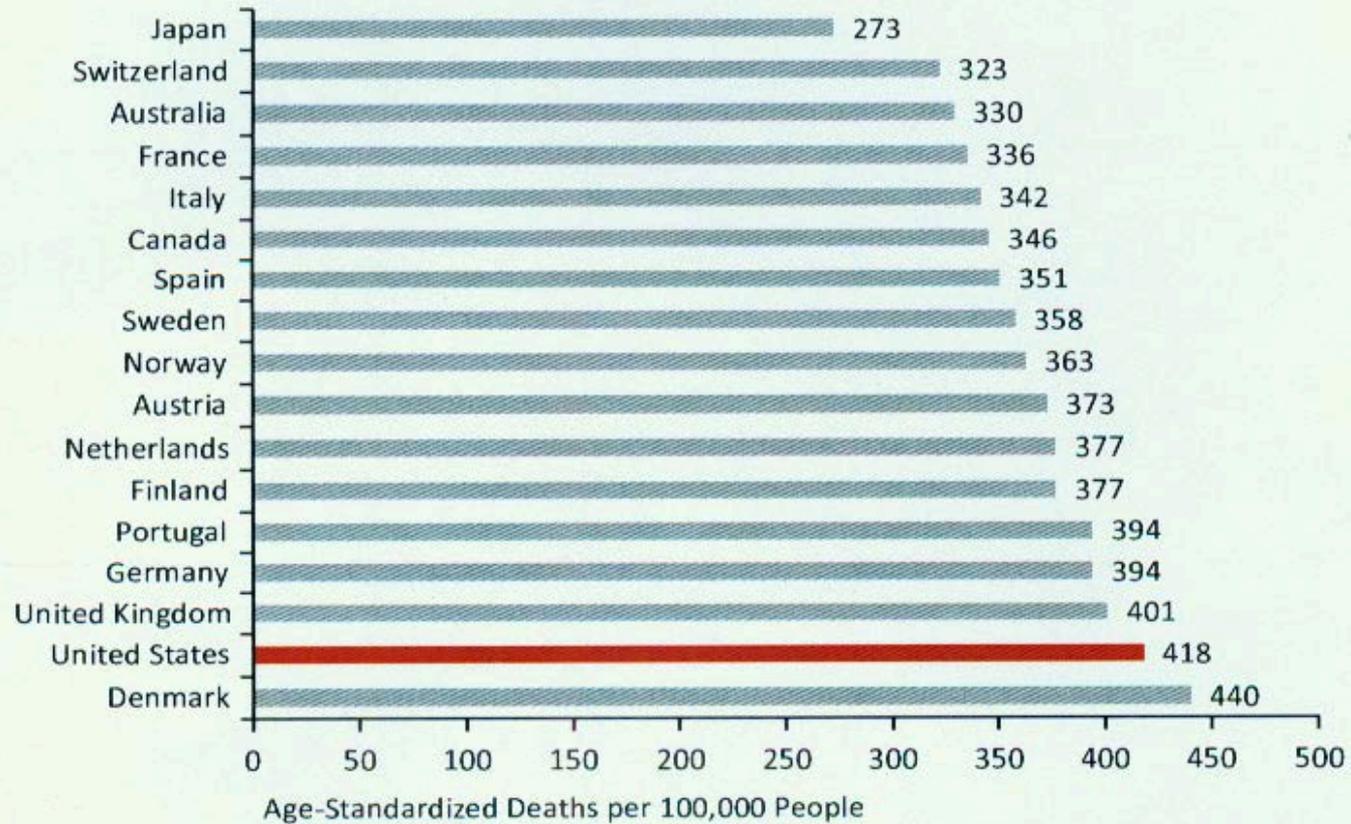
- **Number of deaths: 2,468,435**
  - Heart disease: 597,689
  - Cancer: 574,743
  - Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 138,080
  - Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases): 129,476
  - Accidents (unintentional injuries): 120,859
  - Alzheimer's disease: 83,494
  - Diabetes: 69,071
  - Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis: 50,476
  - Influenza and Pneumonia: 50,097
  - Intentional self-harm (suicide): 38,364
- **Death rate: 799.5 deaths per 100,000 population**
- **Life expectancy: 78.7 years**
- **Infant Mortality rate: 6.15 deaths per 1,000 live births**



# Mortality Rates

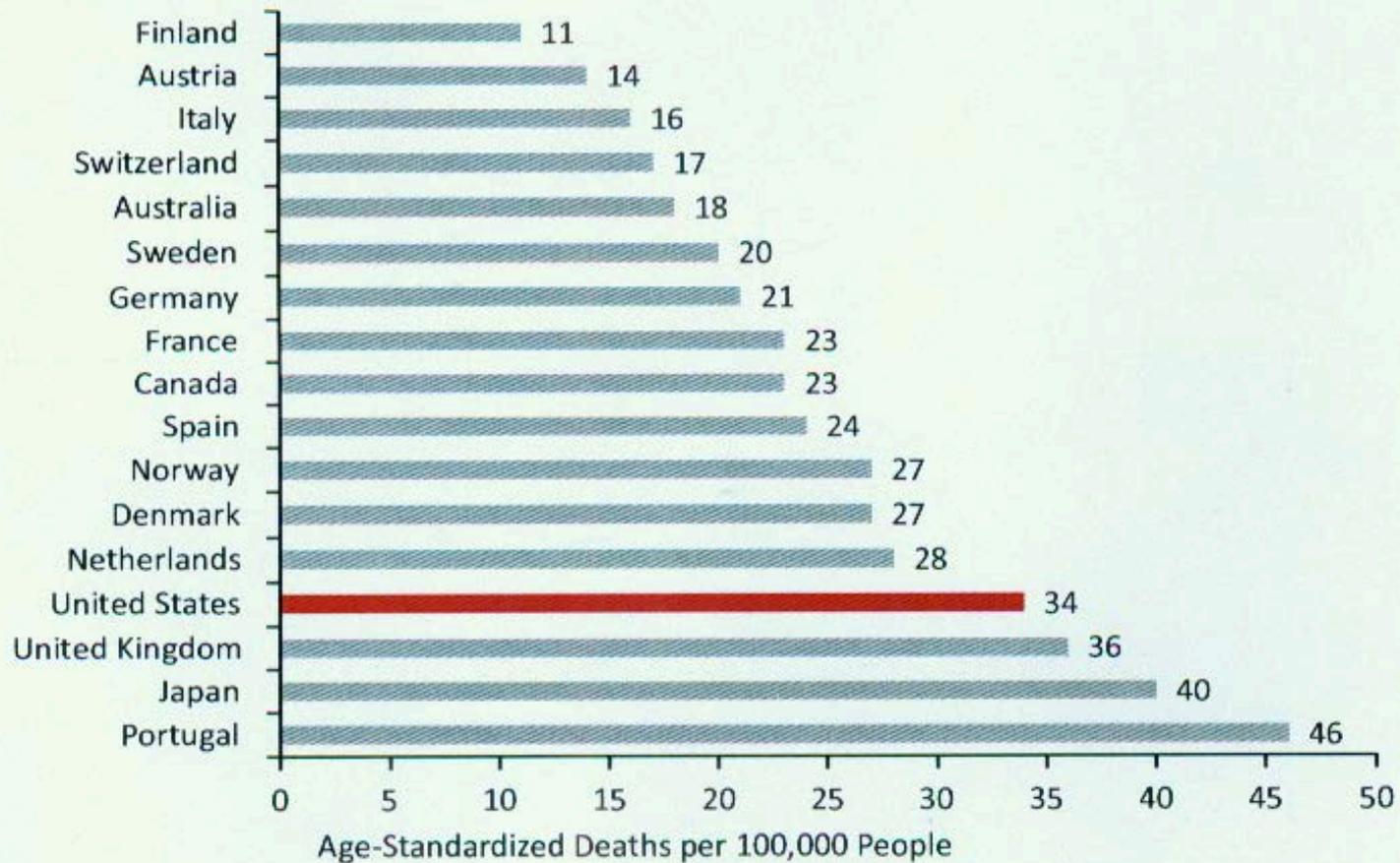
- Americans faced the second highest risk of dying from non-communicable diseases in 2008 (418/100K WHO 2011)
- Fourth highest risk of dying from communicable diseases
- Unintentional injuries leading cause of death in U.S. age 1-44
- Death rates from c-v diseases have decreased everywhere but less in U.S.





**FIGURE 1-1** Mortality from noncommunicable diseases in 17 peer countries, 2008.  
 SOURCE: Data from World Health Organization (2011a, Table 3).





**FIGURE 1-2** Mortality from communicable diseases in 17 peer countries, 2008.  
**SOURCE:** Data from World Health Organization (2011a, Table 3).

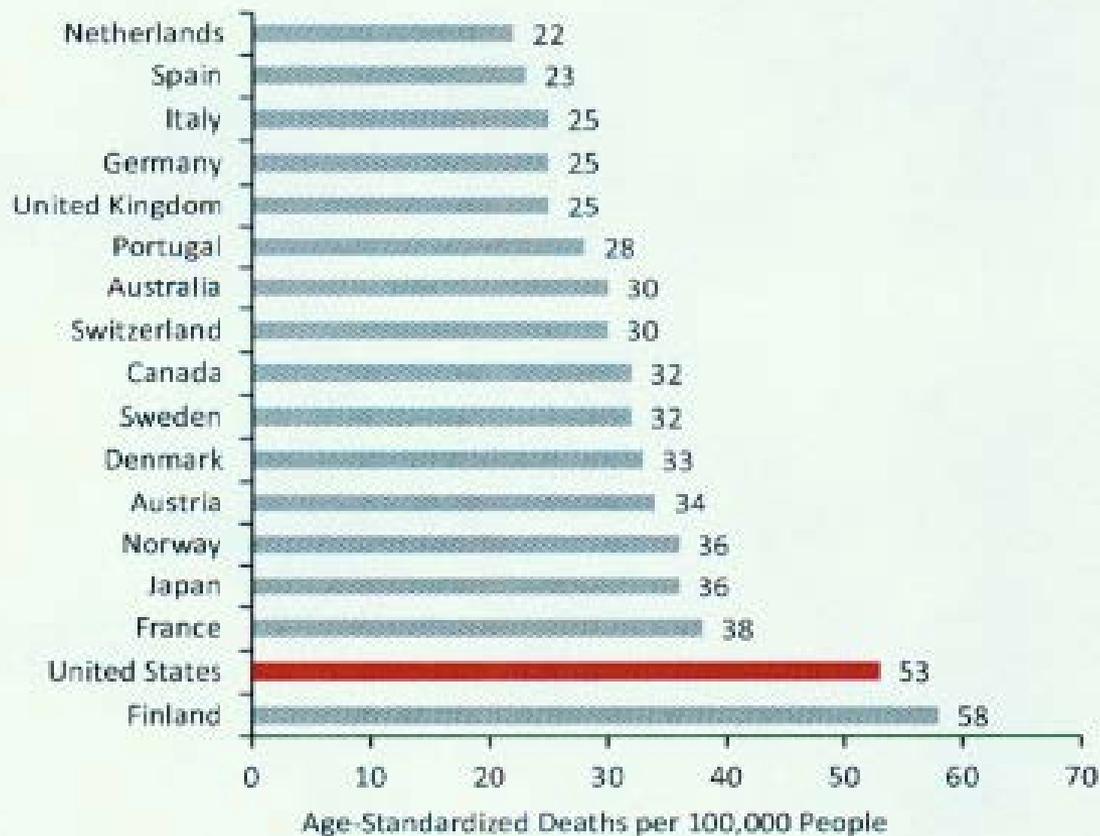
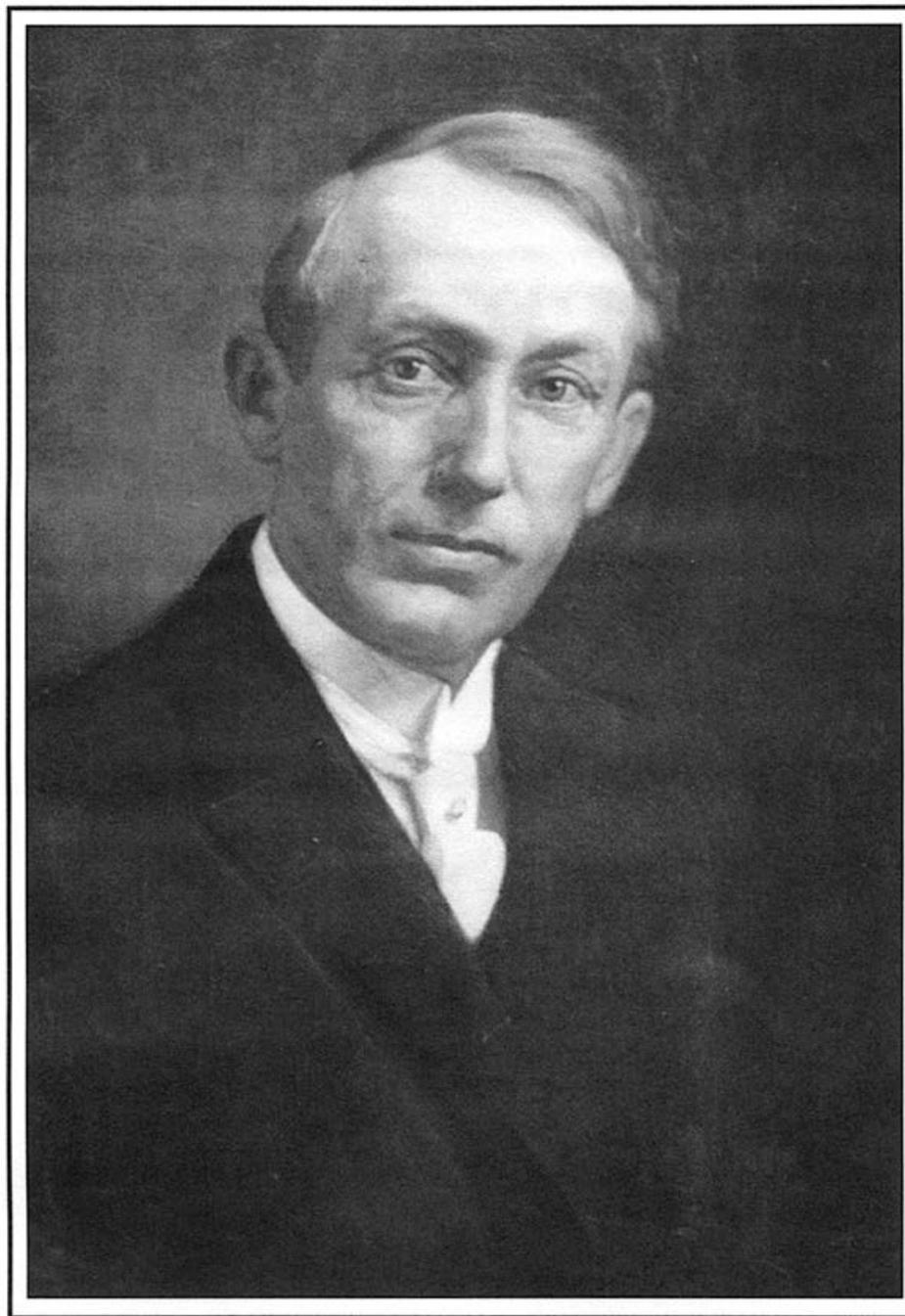


FIGURE 1-3 Mortality from injuries in 17 peer countries, 2008.  
SOURCE: Data from World Health Organization (2011a, Table 3).







Dr. James M. Jackson



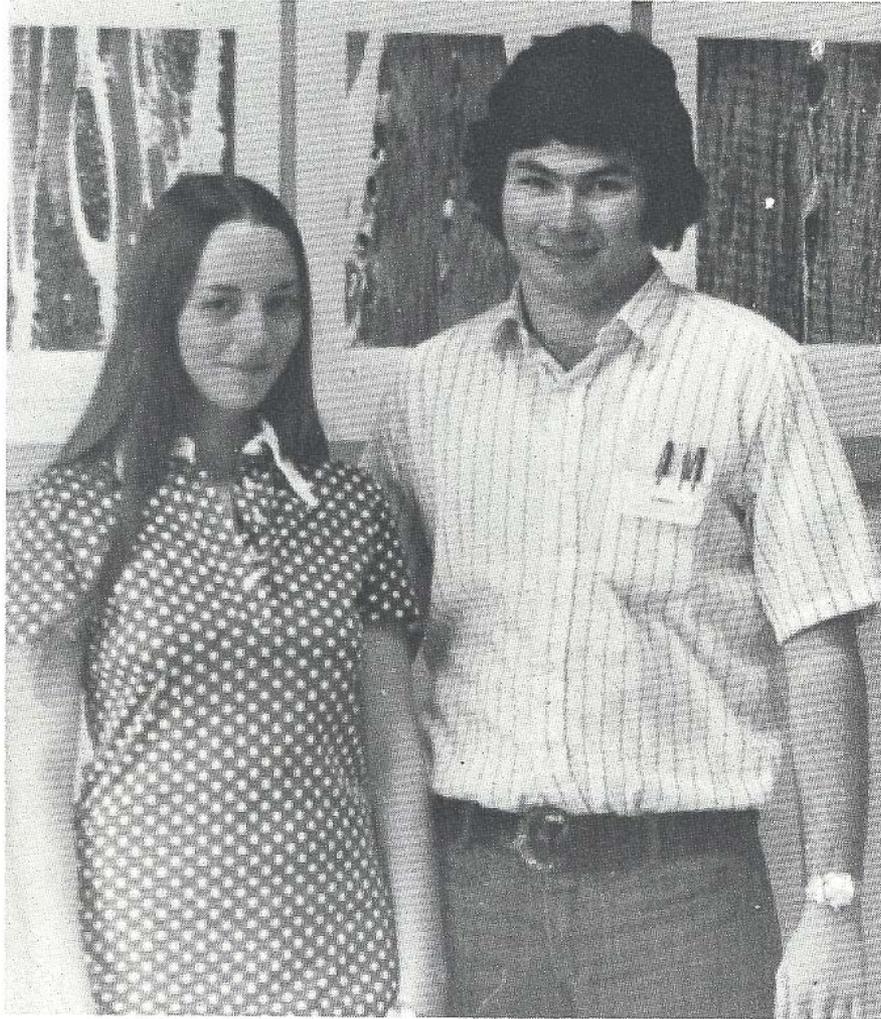




**Dr. James M. Jackson Office**  
190 Southeast 12th Terrace

U. S. National Register of Historic Places  
Currently: Dade Heritage Trust

He may not be much, but he IS a medical student.



**“What accounts for the paradoxical combination in the U.S. of relatively great wealth and high spending on health care with relatively poor health status and lower life expectancy?”**



# Why are Americans so Unhealthy?

- **Health systems**

- Relatively large uninsured population with limited access to primary care
- Lapses in the quality and safety of care outside of hospitals

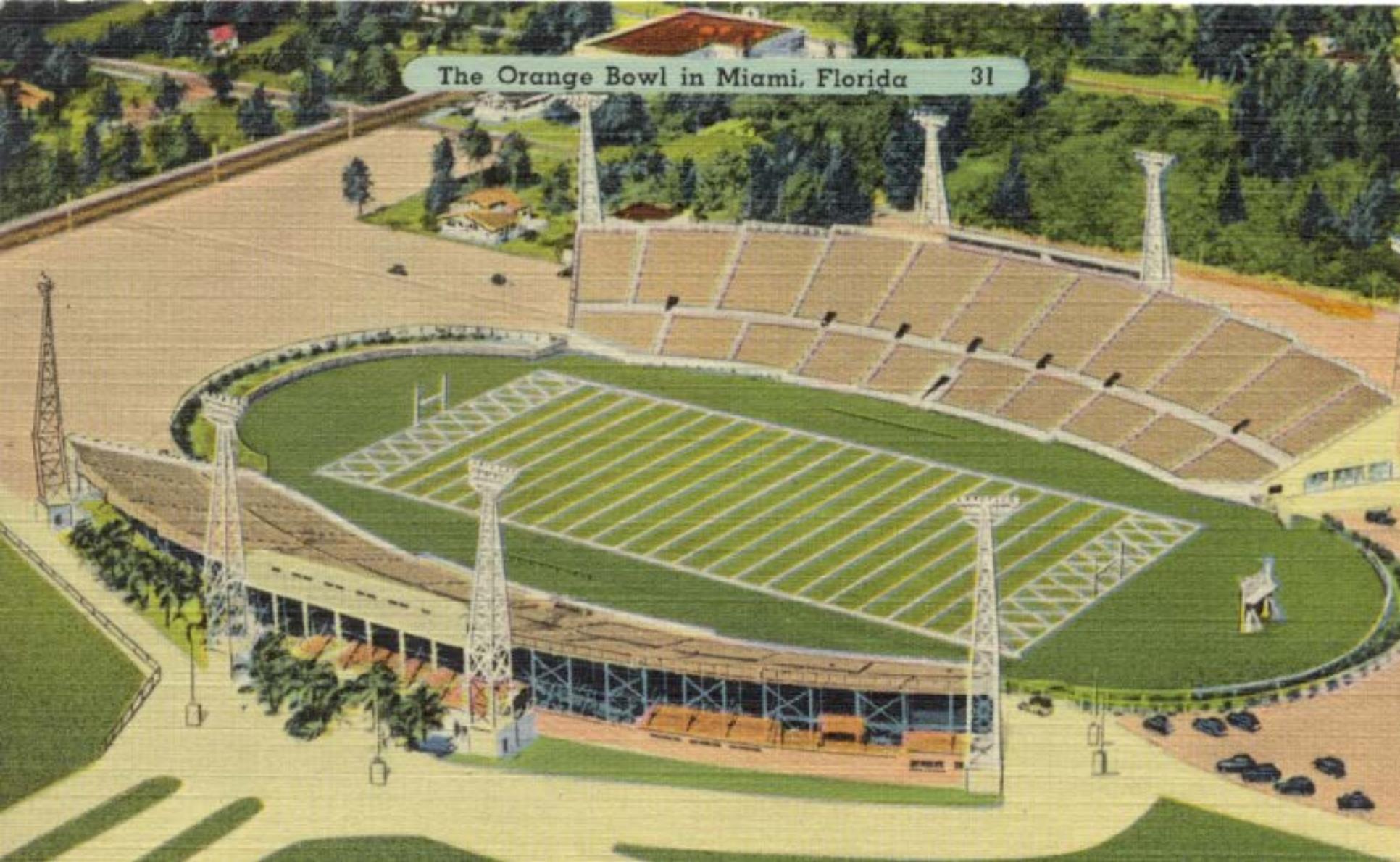
- **Health behaviors**

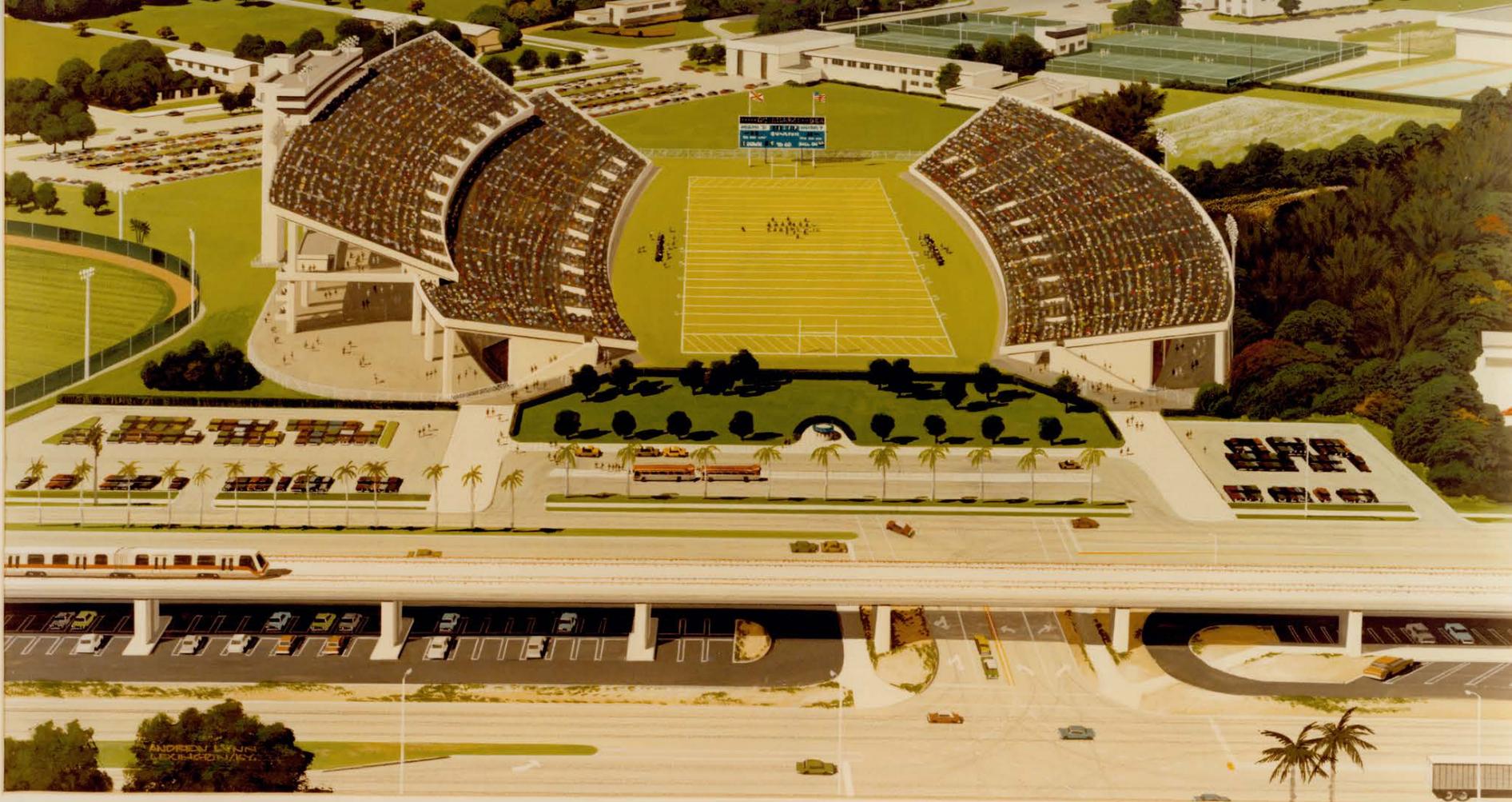
- Americans drink and smoke less but consume the most calories
- Higher rates of drug abuse
- Higher rate of traffic accidents with drugs/alcohol
- Firearms in violence



The Orange Bowl in Miami, Florida

31





**PROPOSED FOOTBALL STADIUM  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

**EDWARD J. GERRITS INC., CONTRACTOR  
JOHNSON / ROMANOWITZ / ARCHITECTS  
MIAMI, FLORIDA  
LEXINGTON, KY.**



# Why are Americans so Unhealthy?

- **Social and economic conditions**

- Income of Americans is higher but higher levels of poverty, income inequality, and lower rates of social mobility
- Other countries have better education of young people which also affects health



- Americans benefit less from safety net programs that can buffer the negative health effects of poverty and other social disadvantages

- **Physical environments**

- Designed around automobiles
- Less physical activity that contributes to obesity

# Infant Mortality Rate--2011

- 1 Sweden 2.2
- 2 Finland 2.3
- 3 Japan 2.4
- 4 Norway 2.6
- 5 Portugal 2.7
- 6 Denmark 3.1
- 7 Italy 3.2
- 8 Germany 3.3
- 9 France 3.4
- 10 Netherlands 3.4
- 11 Austria 3.5
- 12 Spain 3.5
- 13 Switzerland 4.0
- 14 Australia 4.1
- 15 United Kingdom 4.4
- 16 Canada 4.9
- **17 United States 6.4**



TABLE 1-1 Mortality Rates in 17 Peer Countries, 2008

|                                          | Australia | Austria | Canada | Denmark | Finland | France | Germany | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Portugal | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | U.K.  | U.S.  |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|-------|-------|-------------|--------|----------|-------|--------|-------------|-------|-------|
| <b>ALL CAUSES</b>                        | 378.0     | 420.5   | 401.2  | 500.8   | 446.6   | 397.7  | 440.6   | 383.0 | 349.3 | 427.3       | 425.3  | 467.7    | 397.7 | 409.8  | 371.2       | 462.1 | 504.9 |
| Specific causes                          |           |         |        |         |         |        |         |       |       |             |        |          |       |        |             |       |       |
| <i>Noncommunicable diseases</i>          | 329.9     | 372.5   | 345.8  | 440.4   | 377.0   | 336.4  | 393.9   | 342.1 | 273.0 | 376.8       | 363.1  | 393.9    | 351.0 | 357.6  | 323.3       | 400.5 | 418.4 |
| Cardiovascular diseases <sup>d</sup>     | 117.2     | 154.4   | 118.6  | 144.6   | 163.6   | 99.2   | 174.9   | 132.3 | 97.4  | 122.4       | 132.9  | 148.2    | 115.7 | 150.8  | 123.1       | 141.7 | 155.7 |
| Malignant neoplasms <sup>b</sup>         | 118.8     | 123.6   | 125.8  | 157.7   | 106.5   | 138.4  | 127.5   | 124.2 | 115.1 | 147.1       | 130.3  | 134.3    | 122.0 | 116.4  | 112.7       | 137.0 | 123.8 |
| Other neoplasms                          | 2.9       | 3.5     | 2.4    | 3.6     | 2.1     | 5.2    | 2.8     | 5.3   | 3.3   | 3.6         | 2.5    | 2.9      | 3.7   | 3.2    | 2.8         | 2.9   | 2.9   |
| Neuropsychiatric conditions <sup>c</sup> | 26.2      | 19.6    | 28.2   | 38.8    | 48.4    | 34.0   | 19.5    | 18.8  | 7.2   | 32.7        | 32.7   | 16.1     | 28.2  | 34.2   | 33.5        | 31.7  | 39.2  |
| Respiratory diseases                     | 21.6      | 15.5    | 22.4   | 31.2    | 12.7    | 13.3   | 17.3    | 17.3  | 15.8  | 23.9        | 25.4   | 25.6     | 31.1  | 15.5   | 13.4        | 34.4  | 34.3  |
| • Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease  | 12.8      | 12.9    | 15.4   | 26.8    | 9.1     | 5.4    | 11.9    | 11.5  | 4.0   | 19.0        | 20.8   | 10.5     | 12.6  | 11.7   | 9.9         | 21.5  | 24.3  |
| • Asthma                                 | 1.2       | 0.9     | 0.5    | 0.8     | 0.8     | 0.8    | 1.0     | 0.4   | 0.7   | 0.3         | 1.2    | 0.6      | 0.8   | 0.6    | 0.5         | 1.1   | 0.9   |
| Digestive diseases <sup>d</sup>          | 13.0      | 19.4    | 15.5   | 29.5    | 27.2    | 20.4   | 25.7    | 16.4  | 14.5  | 17.4        | 13.7   | 25.6     | 21.3  | 15.1   | 15.9        | 26.7  | 19.8  |
| Diabetes mellitus                        | 9.9       | 17.4    | 13.4   | 12.3    | 5.5     | 8.1    | 11.1    | 12.4  | 4.5   | 10.1        | 7.4    | 19.3     | 9.4   | 9.2    | 8.2         | 5.0   | 15.2  |

|                                       |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Genitourinary diseases <sup>e</sup>   | 8.2         | 5.4         | 7.6         | 8.1         | 3.0         | 5.7         | 7.1         | 5.7         | 8.0         | 9.3         | 7.7         | 12.2        | 9.2         | 4.6         | 4.0         | 9.1         | 12.3        |
| Endocrine disorders                   | 5.2         | 8.1         | 5.1         | 6.5         | 1.6         | 5.8         | 3.5         | 4.3         | 2.6         | 3.5         | 3.8         | 5.3         | 3.4         | 3.2         | 2.7         | 3.1         | 7.1         |
| Congenital anomalies                  | 3.2         | 3.9         | 3.7         | 4.0         | 3.6         | 2.8         | 2.8         | 2.8         | 2.6         | 3.3         | 3.4         | 2.7         | 2.9         | 2.7         | 3.8         | 3.7         | 4.3         |
| Musculoskeletal diseases <sup>f</sup> | 2.8         | 1.5         | 2.4         | 3.4         | 2.3         | 2.5         | 1.2         | 2.0         | 1.7         | 2.4         | 2.6         | 1.4         | 3.0         | 2.1         | 2.8         | 3.5         | 2.9         |
| Skin diseases                         | 0.8         | 0.3         | 0.5         | 0.6         | 0.3         | 0.9         | 0.3         | 0.5         | 0.3         | 1.1         | 0.7         | 0.1         | 1.0         | 0.5         | 0.5         | 1.5         | 0.8         |
| Oral conditions                       | 0.1         | 0.0         | 0.0         | 0.1         | 0.1         | 0.0         | 0.0         | 0.0         | 0.0         | 0.1         | 0.1         | 0.0         | 0.0         | 0.0         | 0.0         | 0.0         | 0.0         |
| <b>Injuries</b>                       | <b>30.0</b> | <b>33.6</b> | <b>32.1</b> | <b>33.1</b> | <b>58.5</b> | <b>38.2</b> | <b>25.2</b> | <b>24.6</b> | <b>36.3</b> | <b>22.1</b> | <b>35.6</b> | <b>28.3</b> | <b>23.2</b> | <b>32.2</b> | <b>30.5</b> | <b>25.5</b> | <b>52.8</b> |
| Unintentional injuries                | 21.0        | 21.2        | 20.6        | 22.3        | 38.6        | 23.3        | 15.4        | 19.0        | 16.1        | 13.7        | 25.2        | 19.3        | 16.7        | 19.7        | 17.2        | 17.4        | 35.5        |
| • Road traffic accidents              | 6.8         | 6.9         | 7.8         | 5.4         | 5.7         | 6.6         | 5.7         | 8.4         | 3.8         | 4.0         | 5.2         | 10.0        | 6.1         | 4.1         | 3.8         | 4.8         | 13.9        |
| • Poisonings                          | 3.0         | 0.2         | 2.1         | 3.8         | 13.9        | 1.6         | 0.9         | 0.7         | 0.6         | 0.9         | 6.8         | 0.2         | 1.0         | 3.2         | 1.9         | 2.8         | 8.9         |
| • Falls                               | 3.1         | 5.3         | 3.7         | 2.8         | 10.1        | 4.0         | 4.6         | 2.2         | 2.5         | 4.0         | 3.7         | 2.5         | 2.2         | 4.1         | 7.5         | 3.5         | 4.4         |
| • Fires                               | 0.3         | 0.3         | 0.6         | 0.9         | 1.2         | 0.6         | 0.3         | 0.2         | 0.7         | 0.3         | 1.0         | 0.5         | 0.3         | 0.7         | 0.1         | 0.5         | 0.9         |
| • Drowning                            | 0.9         | 0.8         | 0.8         | 0.8         | 1.8         | 1.3         | 0.5         | 0.6         | 2.4         | 0.4         | 0.8         | 0.7         | 0.9         | 0.9         | 0.6         | 0.4         | 1.2         |
| • Other                               | 6.9         | 7.8         | 5.6         | 8.6         | 6.0         | 9.3         | 3.3         | 7.0         | 6.2         | 4.1         | 7.7         | 5.4         | 6.1         | 6.7         | 3.3         | 5.5         | 6.2         |
| Intentional injuries                  | 9.0         | 12.3        | 11.5        | 10.8        | 19.9        | 14.8        | 9.9         | 5.6         | 20.2        | 8.4         | 10.4        | 9.0         | 6.5         | 12.6        | 13.3        | 8.0         | 17.3        |
| • Self-inflicted injuries             | 7.8         | 11.8        | 9.9         | 10.1        | 17.7        | 13.6        | 9.1         | 4.5         | 19.8        | 7.4         | 9.7         | 7.5         | 5.6         | 11.7        | 12.6        | 6.9         | 10.3        |

continued



|                                                                                        | Australia | Austria | Canada | Denmark | Finland | France | Germany | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Portugal | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | U.K. | U.S. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|-------|-------|-------------|--------|----------|-------|--------|-------------|------|------|
| • Violence                                                                             | 1.3       | 0.5     | 1.6    | 0.8     | 2.2     | 1.3    | 0.7     | 1.1   | 0.4   | 0.9         | 0.6    | 1.5      | 0.9   | 0.9    | 0.7         | 1.1  | 6.5  |
| • War                                                                                  | —         | —       | —      | —       | —       | 0.0    | —       | —     | —     | 0.1         | 0.0    | 0.0      | —     | —      | —           | —    | 0.4  |
| <i>Communi-<br/>cable, maternal,<br/>perinatal, and<br/>nutritional<br/>conditions</i> | 18.1      | 14.4    | 23.3   | 27.3    | 11.1    | 23.1   | 21.5    | 16.3  | 40.0  | 28.4        | 26.6   | 45.5     | 23.6  | 20.0   | 17.3        | 36.1 | 33.7 |
| Respiratory<br>infections <sup>g</sup>                                                 | 7.0       | 5.7     | 9.0    | 13.9    | 4.0     | 8.4    | 10.1    | 4.7   | 29.7  | 16.8        | 13.8   | 23.6     | 9.3   | 8.9    | 7.4         | 23.8 | 9.7  |
| Infectious and<br>parasitic diseases <sup>h</sup>                                      | 5.9       | 4.7     | 7.6    | 7.6     | 4.4     | 9.0    | 7.4     | 6.8   | 8.1   | 6.9         | 9.2    | 17.5     | 9.8   | 7.8    | 4.7         | 6.7  | 15.4 |
| Maternal<br>conditions                                                                 | 0.1       | 0.0     | 0.1    | 0.2     | 0.1     | 0.1    | 0.1     | 0.0   | 0.1   | 0.1         | 0.1    | 0.1      | 0.1   | 0.1    | 0.0         | 0.1  | 0.4  |
| Perinatal<br>conditions                                                                | 4.6       | 3.8     | 5.9    | 4.4     | 2.5     | 3.6    | 3.6     | 3.8   | 1.3   | 3.6         | 3.1    | 3.4      | 3.7   | 2.4    | 4.8         | 5.2  | 7.1  |
| • Prematurity<br>and low birth<br>weight                                               | 1.2       | 1.9     | 2.0    | 2.7     | 0.9     | 0.6    | 2.0     | 1.5   | 0.4   | 0.8         | 0.4    | 0.9      | 0.9   | 0.4    | 1.4         | 3.4  | 3.2  |
| • Birth asphyxia<br>and birth<br>trauma                                                | 0.6       | 0.5     | 1.1    | 0.6     | 0.4     | 0.8    | 0.5     | 1.1   | 0.4   | 0.7         | 0.5    | 0.8      | 0.7   | 0.5    | 0.7         | 0.6  | 0.9  |



# Fatal and Nonfatal Firearm-Related Injuries, Overall and by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, and Disposition

- Estimated average of 115,000 firearm-related injuries occur annually
- Approximately 30% resulted in death
- Both fatal and nonfatal firearm-related injury rates were highest among persons aged 15--24 years
  - black males in that age group had the highest risk
  - rates for Hispanics were generally less than those for blacks, but higher than those for white, non-Hispanics
- The firearm-related death rate for males was six times higher than that for females
- The nonfatal firearm-related injury rate for males was eight times higher than that for females



# Incidence and Prevalence of Traumatic Brain Injury in the United States

- (TBI) is a leading cause of death and disability among children and young adults in the United States. Each year an estimated 1.5 million Americans sustain a TBI
- 230,000 people are hospitalized and survive
- 50,000 people die
- 80,000 to 90,000 people experience the onset of long-term disability
- Highest risk in adolescents, young adults, and >75
- Causes
  - **Violence, especially suicidal behavior and assaults that involve firearms--the leading cause of TBI-related death**
  - Falls--the leading cause of TBI among the elderly
  - Motor vehicle crashes--the leading cause of TBI resulting in hospitalization.

[http://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/tbi\\_report\\_to\\_congress.html](http://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/tbi_report_to_congress.html)

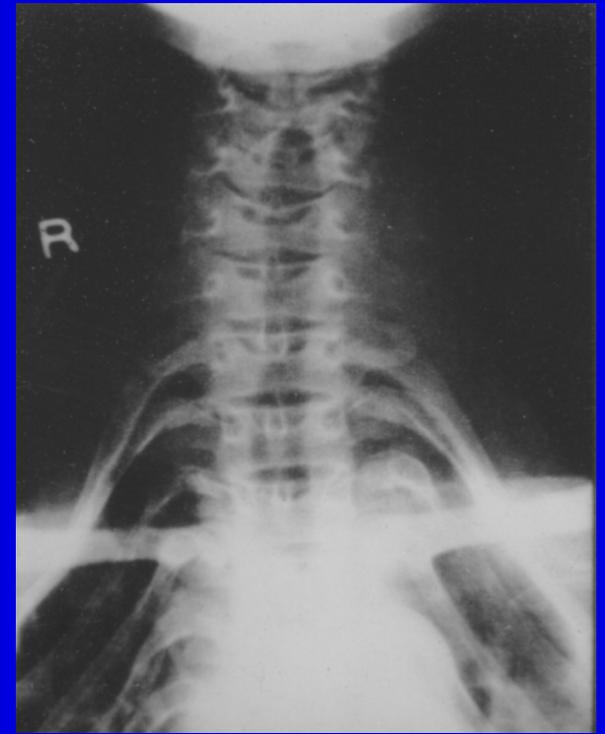


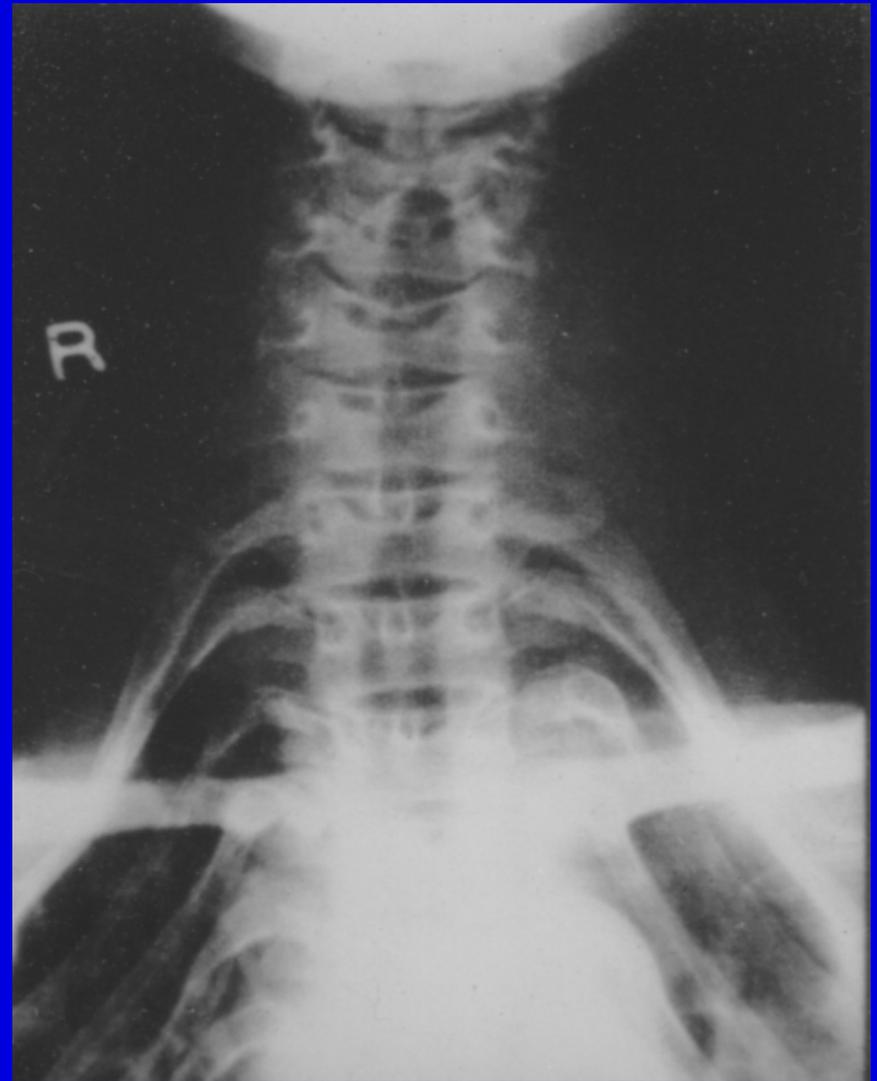


# Can U.S. health care disparities be fully explained by people who are uninsured or poor?

- Even advantaged Americans are in worse health than similar individuals in other countries
- Health disadvantage is more pronounced among socioeconomically disadvantaged groups









# Possible Explanations for the U.S. Health Disadvantage

- U.S. health care is highly fragmented
  - Limited public health and primary care resources
  - Pre-natal care
  - Inaccessible or unaffordable
- Americans less likely to smoke or drink but consume the most calories per capita
- Higher rates of poverty and income inequality
  - U.S. children are more likely than children in peer countries to grow up in poverty and less will improve their SES than in peer countries



# No Single Factor Fully Explains the U.S. Health Disadvantage

- Health care system cannot account for transportation-related accidents or violence
- Individual behaviors may contribute to overall disadvantage
- Problem is not confined to socially or economically disadvantaged Americans
- Substance abuse, physical illness, criminal behavior, family violence—related to a more stressful environment??
- Asthma rates higher--unhealthy housing and polluted air??



# U.S. does have a health advantage when compared to peer countries

- Lower cancer death rates—higher rates of cancer screening and survival
- Greater control of blood pressure and cholesterol
- Americans who reach age 75
- Lower stroke mortality
- Lower rates of current smoking
- Higher average household income
- Suicide rates do not exceed international average
- Immigrants better health than native born Americans



## Recommendations Related to Research

- HHS, NIH, NCHS should join with international partners such as WHO, OECD to improve the quality and consistency of data sources available for cross-national health comparisons
- Support the development for more refined analytical methods and study designs for cross-national health comparisons
- NIH and other agencies should commit to a coordinated portfolio of investigator-initiated and invited research devoted to understanding the factors responsible for the U.S. health disadvantage



# Recommendations Related to Policy

- Achieve established national health objectives directed at the specific disadvantages documented in the report and use strategies and approaches identified as effective
- Philanthropy and advocacy communities should organize a comprehensive media and outreach campaign to inform the general public about the U.S. health disadvantage
- Analytic review of the available evidence on
  - Effect on policies where U.S. has a health disadvantage
  - How these policies have varied over time across high-income countries
  - Extent to which these policy differences may explain cross-national health differences in one or more health domains



# Summary

- Pursue national health objectives
  - Application of effective strategies and policies to reform the health system, promote healthy behaviors, and improve health related social conditions and community environments
- Alert the public and stimulate a national discussion
- Importance of child and family services, support for education, social services that safeguard young people
  - Infant mortality, adolescent homicides
- Identify innovative policies
  - What has worked in other countries and may have applications with adaptations in the U.S.
  - Series of issue-focused investigative studies to seek explanations for the specific health disadvantages



# Cost of Inaction

- U.S. will continue to fall behind other peer countries on health outcomes and mortality
- Drain on life and health may ultimately affect the economy and the prosperity of the United States as other countries reap the benefits of healthier populations and more productive workforces



# Conclusions

- U.S. health disadvantage has multiple causes and involves some combination of
  - Inadequate health care
  - Unhealthy behaviors
  - Adverse economic and social conditions
  - Environmental factors
- Economic Consequences
  - Shorter lives and poorer health will harm the economy as health care costs rise



# Do we really have the best health care system in the world for those who can access it?



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