

- Present the case scenario, and explain the alteration in health (GI or GU) and the health disparities experienced by the fictitious client.
- Discuss the variables that contributed to health disparity in this situation, such as physical, cultural, social, economic, or educational determinants. Explain how the disparity impacts the alteration in health (GI or GU) experienced by the client.
- Prioritize two action steps for the MSN-prepared nurse to minimize disparity, support health equity, and address the alteration in health within your scenario.

A 26-year-old female presents to the emergency department via EMS with 10/10 abdominal pain in her right lower quadrant (RLQ), nausea, and vomiting that began suddenly about four hours ago. The patient was at work just prior to arrival when a co-worker reported seeing her bent over in pain. The patient initially refused transportation and was later convinced to be checked out due to the severity of the pain. Upon assessment, the patient's temperature is 100.7°F and the patient reports excruciating pain in the RLQ and tenderness upon palpation. The provider orders a CBC, CRP, urine pregnancy test, and a CT abdomen. Lab tests show a WBC count that is slightly elevated at 12,600, a CRP of 33, and a negative pregnancy test. The results from the abdominal CT scan show findings consistent with an inflamed appendix. This patient is diagnosed with appendicitis and the provider recommends surgery to remove the inflamed appendix. The patient refuses the surgery stating that she does not have insurance and cannot afford to be out of work for the recovery period as she is already struggling to make ends meet. She is also a single parent with a six-month-old and a four-year-old at home.

The health disparities in this scenario are based upon this patient's socioeconomic status and are identified as low-income and lack of health insurance. In this scenario, the patient refuses to have the needed surgery due to lack of health insurance to cover the cost, and the fact that she must work to make money to be able to support herself and her family. This patient has likely held off on seeking medical care for this issue due to her lack of health insurance and uncertainty regarding income. This has resulted in her condition worsening.

As an MSN-prepared nurse working with this population group, it is important to be aware of resources and options for patients affected by these health disparities to support health equity and promote health and wellness. Resources for this patient include providing the patient with assistance in applying for and obtaining government assisted health insurance, income-based housing, and options for obtaining healthy foods. To address the alteration in health for this patient, the nurse should explain the diagnosis to the patient and include the benefit of surgery as well as the risks associated with postponing or refusing it. Together, these interventions will provide the patient with the knowledge to make an informed decision about medical treatment as well as resources to combat health disparities.