

African American Genealogy Society of Fort Wayne

Research Tools and Tips

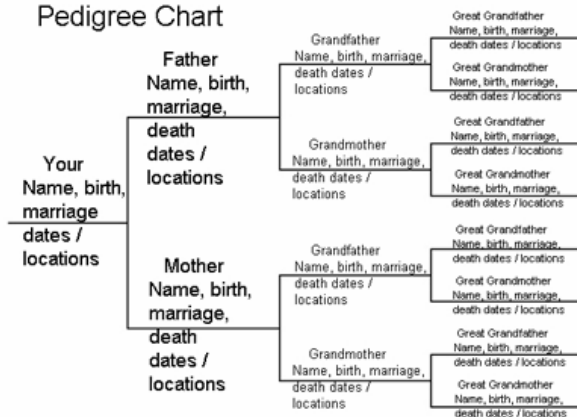
Alfred S. Brothers Jr, PhD

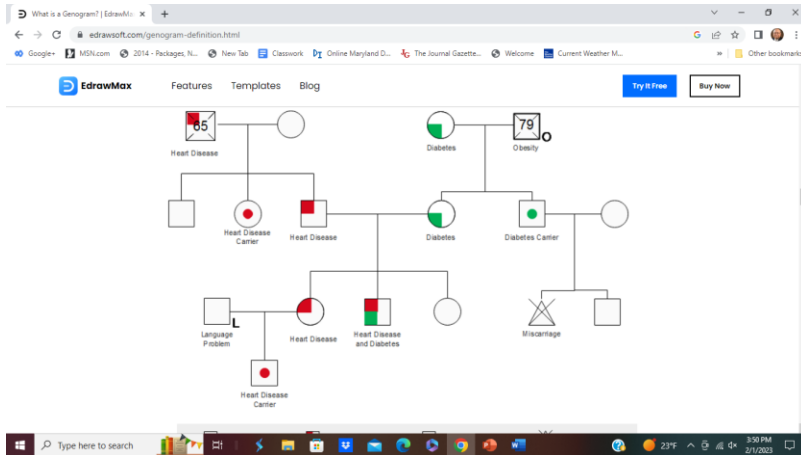
19 February 2023

Handout for Medical Genealogy

- Introduction
 - Genealogy and Medicine are useful tools for understanding the lives, times, and relationships of family members. When combined together, they can create a powerful and useful family picture to help understand the past, recognize the present circumstances, and prepare for the future.
- What is medical genealogy?
 - Medical Genealogy is the practice of tracing and recording family health patterns that are unique to your family (hopefully to include three generations) in order for the family practitioner to analyze.
 - Leads to a Family Health History
- A properly collected family history can:
 - Identify whether a patient has a higher risk for a disease.
 - Help the health care practitioner recommend treatments or other options to reduce a patient's risk of disease.
 - Provide early warning signs of disease.
 - Help plan lifestyle changes to keep the patient well.
- Medical Genealogy tree compared to an established or standard genealogy Pedigree tree

Pedigree Chart





Medical Tree or Genogram

Note: For our Medical Genealogical purposes, you can:

- Update information in Family Tree Maker fields for example.
- Add information to an existing tree.
- Create a tree with specific medical data for each person.
- How do you use it?
 - Determine disease or illness trends in your family.
 - Go back 3 generations or more if you have the family data.
 - Be a Medical Genealogy Detective.
- What resources are available to find the cause of death or illness?
 - Interviewing
 - Start with your parents, siblings, and their children. Then add data from and about grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.
 - Death Certificates
 - Obituaries
 - Cemetery and funeral records
 - Mortality schedules
 - Insurance records
 - Military service and pension records
 - Hospital and doctor records
 - Previous genetic testing results
- What diseases were typical for the past 200 years?
 - What were the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States in 1900?
 - The earliest data, that from 1900, give **influenza/pneumonia, tuberculosis, diarrhea/enteritis, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, accidents, cancer, senility, and diphtheria** as the leading causes of death.
 - What was the leading cause of death in 1920?

- Skipping farther back to 1920 the leading causes are **influenza/pneumonia, heart disease, tuberculosis, stroke, kidney disease, cancer, accidents, diarrhea/enteritis, premature birth, and childbirth related conditions.**
- 18th and 19th century deadly diseases
- Smallpox, typhoid fever, dysentery, malaria, yellow fever, measles
- Diseases and epidemics of the 19th century included long-standing epidemic threats such as **smallpox, typhus, yellow fever, and scarlet fever.** In addition, cholera emerged as an epidemic threat and spread worldwide in six pandemics in the nineteenth century.

Note: use online resources to understand old medical terms.

- Illnesses and causes of deaths in our enslaved relatives.
 - How long did whites and blacks live in slave holding times?
 - The life expectancy in 1850 of a white person in the United States was forty; for a slave, thirty-six.
 - Many slave owners had slave hospitals on their plantations to maintain the health of their slaves.
 - Diseases specific among US enslaved people
 - Tetanus.
 - Nascentium, or "nine-day fits" (lock jaw)
 - High infant mortality.
 - Worms.
 - Diphtheria.
 - Whooping cough.
 - Cholera.
 - Typhoid.
- Illnesses and ethnicity
 - Based upon your ancestry can we predict what illnesses may be present or predisposed?
 - Ethnicity, race, and national origin do matter.
- How do we keep track of information and data
 - Templates and Logs

Data Collection Sheet Header

Health History	Father or Mother's Side								
Relationship	Name	Birth	Location	Death	Age	Location	Occupation	Cause	Other

Family Medical Genealogy Log Header

	Health History Log				
Father or Mother's Side					
Relationship	Name	Birth	Death	Age	Cause

- How to put it together
 - Build a record of illnesses and causes of deaths (use templates).
 - Identify any unusual illnesses or causes of deaths.
 - Identify if there are trends in males and females.
 - When did the trend start and with whom?
 - Remember to check major illnesses and outbreaks in the time-period your relatives lived:
 - Flu, smallpox, influenza, polio, cholera, measles, tuberculosis (consumption), yellow fever, scarlet fever, etc.
 - Build a Medical Genealogy Tree
- How to share the information and to whom
 - Family Tree Maker fields
 - Doctor's office and records
 - Medical planning and research for family
 - Share with family members at gatherings.
 - Family reunion topic
- Health Information from DNA Analysis
 - Two major companies Ancestry and 23andme
 - Other companies do provide health analysis as well.
 - Key questions center on data available, privacy, and accuracy
- Summary
 - Be a family Medical Genealogy Detective
 - Investigate family health and illnesses and deaths back 3 generations.
 - Investigate possible predispositions based upon race, ethnicity, or family origin.
 - Create records to store the data and information.
 - Use excel templates and Health History Log.
 - Provide information to family doctor and other relatives.
 - Get a DNA tests to better understand ancestry and health traits.
 - Use Ancestry and 23andMe to get data from DNA.
 - Use this as another tool in your Genealogy toolkit.
- Online Resources
 - <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/precision-medicine/collecting-family-history>
 - https://www.cdc.gov/genomics/famhistory/famhist_basics.htm
 - <https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/understanding/inheritance/familyhistory/>
 - <https://www.thoughtco.com/tracing-your-family-medical-history-1422000>
 - <https://library.nashville.org/blog/2019/04/creating-medical-family-tree>
 - <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/genealogy/index.html>
 - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK115560/>
 - <https://www.bluecrossmn.com/wellbeing/make-health-decisions/how-create-family-health-history>
 - <https://familytreemagazine.com/general-genealogy/diving-into-your-gene-pool/>
 - <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/featured-topic/knowing-and-recording-your-family-health-history>
 - <https://www.genomicseducation.hee.nhs.uk/taking-and-drawing-a-family-history/>

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5178829/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slave_health_on_plantations_in_the_United_States
- https://sites.rootsweb.com/~njmorris/general_info/disease.htm