

METHODS AND MEASUREMENT

To develop successful interventions, researchers need rigorous methods for understanding the causes of health disparities. Measuring social determinants involves many domains, such as income, education, and employment, that are measured at multiple levels, from individual to national. Health disparities researchers need to use consistent measures and adopt methods that are designed to detect causal relationships in observational data. Promising tools for describing and predicting how social factors affect health disparities outcomes include simulations and systems modeling.

This group of strategies is one of three pillars in NIMHD's plan to advance health disparities science and improve minority health. These three pillars are methods and measurement, etiology, and interventions.



Indicators for Measuring Health Disparities

- ▶ Promote adoption of common outcomes to quantify health disparities processes across different diseases and conditions and develop sentinel indicators.
- ▶ Develop a set of indicators that reflects the complexity of population characteristics and that can be adjusted to capture changing U.S. demographics.
- ▶ Make explicit the assumptions and values that may be implicit in health disparity outcomes.



Methods for Analyzing Health Determinants Contributing to Health Disparities

- ▶ Strengthen and promote analytic methods, particularly models, that will enable a better understanding of causes of health disparities.
- ▶ Push the limits of systems modeling to increase its ability to predict relationships between health disparities and health determinants and to assess health disparities interventions.
- ▶ Identify and strengthen rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods to enable analysis on small populations and subpopulations.



Evaluating Health Disparities Research

- ▶ Evaluate health disparities programs and research, including policy interventions and natural experiments.
- ▶ Clarify whether the intent of the evaluation is process or summative and ensure the evaluation design is relevant to the diversity of the population being assessed.



Health Disparities in The Era of Big Data

- ▶ Leverage and foster linkages between existing and emerging data sources, including big data, to magnify the data's analytic capacity and to more swiftly translate health disparities findings into health disparities reductions.
- ▶ Develop and define best practices for incorporating and using geographic identifiers in health disparities research to promote place-based research.