COVID-19: Addressing Health Equity in the U.S.

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Environmental Justice and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty

Edited by Celeste Murphy-Greene
Equality vs Equity

WHOLE COMMUNITY

While each individual defines “community” differently, the “Whole Community” refers to individuals and families, including those with access and functional needs, businesses, faith-based and community organizations, nonprofit groups, schools and academia, media outlets, and all levels of government, including state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal partners that have a shared responsibility in emergency preparedness and mitigation.
Equality vs Equity vs Justice

**Equality**
The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is equal treatment.

**Equity**
Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of “affirmative action”), thus producing equity.

**Justice**
All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.
What is Social Equity

“Social Equity is about fairness, right, justice, and freedom from the effects of bias...It is a pragmatic condition that describes access to, distribution of, and outcome related to public goods” (Guy & McCandless, 2020).
What is Health Equity?

Health equity is when everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing efforts to address avoidable inequities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of disparities in health and healthcare. The population health impact of COVID-19 has exposed longstanding inequities that have systematically undermined the physical, social, economic, and emotional health of racial and ethnic minority populations and other population groups that are bearing a disproportionate burden of COVID-19. (CDC 2021c)
COVID-19 exposed “pre-existing” health inequities in the U.S.

Highest death rates are among American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Blacks, and Hispanics. (CDC, 2021).
Pandemic Vulnerability Index (PVI)

PVI-provides data on location of the most vulnerable communities in the U.S. Uses the following measures:

1) Infection Rate Transmissible Cases,
2) Infection Rate Disease Spread,
3) Population Concentration/Population Mobility,
4) Population Concentration/Residential Density,
5) Intervention/Social Distancing,
6) Intervention/Testing,
7) Health & Environment/Population Demographics,
8) Health & Environment/Air Pollution,
9) Health & Environment/ Age Distribution,
10) Health and Environment/Co-Morbidities,
11) Health & Environment/Health Disparities, and
Occupational Status and COVID-19

- Goldman et al (2021) reveal linkages between occupation standing and COVID-19 related exposure for American Indians (AI), Alaskan Natives (AN), Black and Hispanics.

- Whites more likely to work remotely.

- AI, AN, Blacks and Latinos are more likely to hold jobs of lower occupational standing, with no remote option, putting them at risk of COVID exposure.
COIVD-19 and Farmworkers

- Bottemiller Erich et al. (2020) found farmworkers faced disproportionately high rate of infection from COIVD-19.

- Counties in CA, WA, AZ, OR, and NC with the highest infection rates were the top agricultural producers.

- Murphy-Greene (2002) found farm worker, who are largely Hispanic, are a risk of exposure to occupational hazards due to a lack of personal protective equipment and basic hand washing facilities and toilets.

- OSHA still exempts farms of 11 or fewer workers to provide hand washing facilities and toilets for farm workers.
Blacks lag behind in vaccination rate compared to overall vaccination rate in U.S.

As of Nov. 2, 2021 58.1% of U.S. population has received one dose and 67.1% are fully vaccinated (Mayo Clinic, 2021).
Percent of People Receiving COVID-19 Vaccine by Race/Ethnicity and Date Reported to CDC, United States

December 14, 2020 – September 13, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>At Least One Dose</th>
<th>Fully Vaccinated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AI/AN, NH</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian, NH</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, NH</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH OPI, NH</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, NH</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race/Ethnicity data were available for 63.9% receiving at least one dose and 69.1% of people fully vaccinated.

Graphs showing the percent vaccinated by date reported for different races/ethnicities.

Social Vulnerability and COVID-19

The CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) consists of five themes:

1) Socio Economic Status,
2) Household Composition and Disability Status
3) Racial/Ethnic Minority Status and English
4) Household type and Transportation.

Hughes et al. (2021) found of 49,264,338 people in counties in 49 states and the District of Columbia receiving at least one dose of the vaccine, vaccination rates were higher (15.8%) in counties with low SVI than in high SVI counties (13.9%).
Social antecedents that create vulnerability within certain groups.


Urban Heat Islands just another by product of environmental injustice

A majority of our essential workers are African American.
We have an ethical obligation to provide the most vulnerable protection first.

HAIR Network. Building community reliance one cut at a time.
#TSRHealth: President Biden Enlisting 1,000 Black-Owned Beauty Salons & Barbershops To Administer COVID-19 Vaccine As Part Of His ‘Shots At The Shop’ Initiative
So what can we do? How do we regain and build trust?
failing to prepare = prepare to fail
Presidential Policy Directive-8 (PPD-8) and the National Preparedness Goals (NPG) provide an outline for building national sustainable resilience using a whole community approach, which includes:

- All individuals and families
- Private businesses
- Faith-based and nongovernmental organizations
- Medical/healthcare and educational institutions
- Media and social media platforms
- Federal, state, local, territories, and tribes.

Gather the collective resources (i.e., strategic stockpiles) and exploit them to benefit and sustain the socioeconomic stability, safety, and security of communities across the country. This ensures the ability to provide much needed resources to areas where capacity is exceeded.

TRUST
Environmental Justice and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty

Edited by Celeste Murphy-Greene, University of Virginia, USA

This book examines the issue of environmental justice across eleven short chapters, with the aim of creating a resilient society. Starting with a history of the environmental justice movement the book then moves on to focus on various current environmental issues, analyzing how these issues impact low-income and minority. The book will be of interest to upper level undergraduate and graduate students studying race relations, environmental politics and policy, sustainability, and social justice. It will also appeal to practitioners working at all levels of government, and anyone with an interest in environmental issues, racial justice, and the construction of resilient communities.

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