Community engagement in health equity-focused research published in high-impact medical journals

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• Health equity is an important focus of medical research
• Community-engaged research addresses health disparities by involving stakeholders (e.g., community members, practitioners, organizations etc.) throughout the research process

**Research Question**

Is community engagement reported in health equity-focused publications in high-impact medical journals?
Place of residence
Race/Ethnicity/culture/language
Occupation
Gender/sex
Religion
Education
Socioeconomic status
Social capital

PLUS Characteristics associated with discrimination

Community-Engaged Research

- Incorporates community-academic partnerships with the aim of addressing health equity
- Recognized as a principle in the ethical conduct of human research
- Exists on a continuum

**Stages of the Research Process**

- Study design
- Study implementation
- Data analysis
- Acknowledgement/authorship
• Top 3 highest-impact general medical journals
• Also included all affiliated subspecialty journals

THE LANCET

The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

JAMA®
Search Strategy

Bibliometric Search
MEDLINE

→

Manual Screen
PROGRESS-PLUS

→

Community Engagement Assessment
Inclusion Criteria

• Original research

• JAMA Network, NEJM Group, or The Lancet Group journals

• Primary objective aligned with PROGRESS-PLUS topic

  • Unavoidable or unjust health difference

• January 1, 2021 to September 22, 2022
Results
Search Results

Records identified from MEDLINE (n = 7972)

Duplicate records removed (n = 359)

Records screened (n = 7616)

Records excluded (n = 6676)

Articles assessed for eligibility (n = 940)

Reports excluded:
- Not equity focused (n = 248)
- Brief report or not original research (n = 66)

Studies included in review (n = 626)
Health Equity-Focused Articles by Journal Family

- JAMA Network: 3.5 articles
- Lancet Group: 2 articles
- NEJM Group: 0.5 articles
Study Characteristics

Health Equity-Focused Articles by Country

- USA: 626 articles (%)
- UK: 10 articles
- Canada: 5 articles
- Australia: 2 articles
- China: 1 article
- Denmark: 1 article
- Multiple/Global: 1 article
- Other: 1 article

n= 626
Study Characteristics

Health Equity-Focused Articles by PROGRESS PLUS Topic

- Other
- Race/Ethnicity/Culture/Language
- Socioeconomic Status
- Place of residence
- Gender/Sex/Sexual Orientation
- PLUS
- Occupation
- Social Capital
- Education
- Religion

Articles (%)

n= 626

Health Equity Topics- "Other"

- Access to Care
- Health Insurance
- Immigration Status
- Multiple
- Other

Articles (%)

n= 228
Is community engagement being used in equity-focused research?

- 15.8% (n=99) articles reported community engagement at any stage
- 1.6% (n=10) reported at all stages
Community Engagement by Research Stage

- All Stages: 1.6%
- Study Implementation: 4.5%
- Study Design: 3.0%
- Data Analysis: 0.5%
- Acknowledgment/Authorship: 12.3%

n= 626
Acknowledgements

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Characteristics of articles that included Community Engagement at all stages:

- **Study Design**
  - Qualitative: 50.0% (n= 5)
  - Cross-sectional: 2.0% (n= 2)

- **Health Equity Topic**
  - Race/ethnicity/culture/language: 50.0% (n= 5)
  - Other: 3.0% (n= 3)

- 60.0% (n=6) focused on adult populations
• There is a lack of community engagement being reported in health equity-focused research

• Among articles that did report community engagement, quality of the engagement varied significantly

• Need for standardized reporting of community engagement in equity-focused research
Barriers to Community Engagement

- Ethics
- Cost/Funding
- Guidance
- Time
Dedicated to catalyzing research that advances health equity for children and their families

Community Engagement Series: presenters focus on innovative community-engaged research projects and methods

Drop-in consultations: support for our members in their community-engaged and knowledge mobilization needs

Trainee Hub: a new initiative to learn about the foundations, ethical dimensions, and planning for community-engaged research

Online resource library

Community advisory committee in progress

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