

Abstract

Advancing Disability in the Nation's Health Disparity Agenda: Comparison of Disability and Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups in Socio-Economic Status and Health Outcomes

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Background and Importance

Health disparities have been defined as differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions among specific population groups (NIH, 1999). Traditionally, "specific population groups" have included racial and ethnic groups and excluded individuals with disabilities (PWD). As part of a proposed panel on the nation's health disparity agenda, this presentation will describe comparisons between PWDs and racial and ethnic (R/E) minorities (Black, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic) in socio-economic status and health outcomes.

Methods & Results

National data from the 2008 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (n=404,509), a state-based, random digit dialed telephone survey conducted in all 50 states and territories, was analyzed using Stata 10.1.

Fewer PWDs (43%) were employed compared to R/E populations (range: 50-60%). Thirty-three percent of PWDs earned \$25,000 or less, exceeded only by Hispanics. Thirteen percent of PWDs had less than a high school education, exceeded only by Hispanics. All R/E minorities reported better health status than PWDs. Compared to R/E populations, PWDs were more likely to smoke, less likely to exercise, had higher rates of cardiovascular events, obesity, and diabetes, and were more likely to report cost as a medical care barrier.

Conclusion

As a group, PWDs experience many SES and health disparities that exceed those found in racial and ethnic minority populations. Given these results, national health disparity efforts should include disability as a specific population group.

Learning Objectives:

At session's end, participants will be able to:

1. Define traditional approaches to health disparity populations
2. Describe the SES of PWDs versus racial/ethnic minority groups

3. Describe the health status and health outcomes of PWDs versus racial/ethnic minority groups

Keywords: Health Disparities, Disability

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