Equity Lens in Public Health

Reducing Health Inequities: The Contribution of Public Health Services in BC

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Population Health Interventions

- Population health interventions are policies or programs within the health sector or between sectors that have the potential to impact health at the population level.
- PHIs are often provided through public health services, or they may involve collaboration across sectors.
- The defining characteristic is population health impact.
CPHRI Program of Research

Core Public Health Functions Renewal

Context and Process of Implementation
Outcomes of PH Renewal
Core Competencies for PH
Equity Lens Integration
Linking PH and PHC
Purpose of ELPH

The purpose of this program of research is to guide and inform learning about the integration of an equity lens in public health to contribute knowledge of health inequities reduction.

As an exemplar, we will examine the integration of an equity lens in the promotion of mental health and reducing the harms of substance use.
Population Health Interventions in ELPH Program of Research
ELPH Grant Goals

• Identify and understand the **contextual influences** that promote uptake of health equity as a priority in the health system;

• Explore the **engagement** of public health with other sectors in health inequities reduction in mental health promotion and prevention of harms of substance use;

• Critically analyze the theoretical and practical utility of existing **equity tools**;

• Develop a theoretical understanding of the **ethical issues** encountered by public health practitioners in their efforts to reduce health inequities for those impacted by social disadvantages.
Four Inter-Related Studies over 5 Years

1. Assessing health equity priorities and strategies
2. Intersectoral collaboration for health inequities reduction
3. Assessing the theoretical relevance and practical utility of health equity tools
4. Power and ethics in public health practice
Study 3: Assessing the Theoretical Relevance and Practical Utility of Health Equity Tools

1. What health equity tools are available?
2. What is the theoretical relevance of available tools?
3. What is the practical utility of available tools?
Definition of an Equity Tool

A document that

– **assesses** the degree to which health equity is included in policies or programs (e.g. health equity audits), or
– **measures** health equity, or
– **promotes** the inclusion of health equity in policy or programs.
Document Search Process

• Initial search of online databases using terms related to *health equity*, *health disparity* and *health inequalities* yielded over 500 documents.
Search Terms

- disparity
- health
- inequality
- equity
- guide
- audit
- checklist
- framework
- lens
- model
- focused
- assessment
- impact
- tool
Creating an Inventory

Documents entered into inventory

Documents assessed for fit with definition of “tool”

Documents screened against definition of public health

Duplicates removed

Beginning categorization

Online databases searched
Beginning Categorization

- Assessing Policies and Programs
- Measuring Health Equity
- Conceptual Orientation and General Guidance
- Other
Assessing Theoretical Relevance

Does the tool address:
1. Social conditions that shape health outcomes
2. Determinants of inequities (e.g. racism, gender bias, and so on).
3. Social, historical and cultural roots of disadvantage
4. Distribution of power in both the production of inequities and policy processes

(Pauly et al., under review)
Theoretical Guidance

1. What theoretical perspective(s) underpin the tool?
2. Are the theoretical underpinnings clear?
3. What tools are theoretically suited to different levels/spheres of application?
Assessing Practical Utility

Concept Mapping with public health practitioners engaged in developing and implementing health authority health equity plans, promotion of mental health, and prevention of substance use programs.
Assessing Practical Utility

This will lead to the development of a set of criteria (generated by practitioners) for assessing the practical utility of equity tools.
How Practitioners Can Use This Research

• Year 3 workshop on health equity tools rated for theoretical relevance and practical utility.

• Practitioners will have both produced and be able to use knowledge of equity tools and identify the best tool for what they want to do.
Funders

Website

www.uvic/elph