Region V: Achieving Equity in Infant and Maternal Morbidity and Mortality

Pt I: Disrupting the Status Quo

Vijaya K. Hogan
VKH Consulting, LLC
Session Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Embrace the conceptualization of racial equity as a complex outcome

2. “Disrupt” current ways of thinking that mire public health action in old and ineffectual ways of doing

3. Establish a more systematic process, structure & provide appropriate funding and oversight for building the capacity to achieve equity
Agenda

Part I

1. Introduction

2. Recap: the Problem of Inequity

3. Description: Current Approaches to Achieving Equity

4. Critique of Current Approaches to Equity

5. How Should We Approach Equity?

6. Preview of Part II
Introduction
Summary

• Can’t ascribe the work of one group to the whole organization

• Can’t wait another generation for progress

• Make it your leadership legacy to achieve actual and sustained progress toward equity
The Problem of Inequity

Slides courtesy of Dr Arthur James and Dr. Donald Warne
Ohio White & Black IMRs: 1990-2019 (49 years)

Source: CDC Wonder
B/W Disparity or Inequity:

In every State we see a persistent, “49-year” gap in the opportunity to survive the 1st year of life.

In 2013 the Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality stated:

...“our ability to prevent infant deaths and to address long-standing disparities in infant mortality rates... is a measure of our society’s commitment to the health & well-being of all women, children and families.”
Ohio White & Black IMRs: 1990-2019 (49 years)

Disparity or Inequity Ratio

1.78x

54% improvement

2.64x

69% improvement

Source: CDC Wonder
B/W Disparity Ratios:

Every Region V State has well established trends or patterns of improving WIMRs at a faster pace than improving BIMRs. Over time, this has resulted in an increase in disparity ratios.

Understanding the reliability of well established “trends” is important...

Because, unless we disrupt these patterns or trends, they allow us to reliably predict what to expect in the future. Unlike the math query (above), these patterns are not laws of nature...

WE CONTROL THEM!!!
Survival Time-Lag:

In each State this 49-years of data represents well-established trends or patterns. On the basis of the trends, if we take our most recent 2019 BIMRs and extrapolate back to the last time we find a comparable WIMR...the time interval, depending on the State, is between 34-45-years.

This suggests that unless we change these trends, Black babies in our States will have to wait another 34-45 years to experience the same opportunity to survive the 1st year of life as White babies did in 2019!

We can and must do better.
• Inequities have persisted

• Inequities have complex causality
  Require solutions to match the problem

• Inequities have dimension and do not respond to traditional attempts to lower rates
Inter-Generational Basis for Chronic Disease Disparities Among American Indians and Alaska Natives

Historical Trauma
- Genocide
  - Boarding School Experiences
    - Abuse (physical, sexual)
    - Neglect
    - Abandonment
    - Forced Removal
    - Loss of culture & language
    - Forced Christianity
    - Lost traditional parenting & family structure
  - Adverse Childhood Experiences
    - Abuse (physical, sexual)
    - Neglect
    - Substance Abuse in home
    - Mental Health Dx in home
    - Witnessing violence
    - Divorce
    - Food insecurity
    - Family member in prison
  - Adverse Adulthood Experiences
    - Alcoholism & SA
    - Suicide rates / death rates
    - Poverty / Poor nutrition
    - Racism / Toxic Stress
    - Role models
      - Few positive
      - Many negative
      - Parenting

Childhood Stressors
- Birth
- WIC
- FDPIR

Adulthood Stressors
- Chronic Disease Disparities
African American Citizenship Status: 1619-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Span:</th>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>Years:</th>
<th>% U.S. Experience:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1619-1865</td>
<td>Slaves: &quot;Chattel&quot;</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1865-1964</td>
<td>Jim Crow: virtually no Citizenship rights</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964-2021*</td>
<td>&quot;Equal&quot;</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1619-2021</td>
<td>&quot;Struggle&quot; &quot;Unfairness&quot;</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>100%</td>
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* USA struggles to transition from segregation & discrimination to integration of AA’s

Causal Factors in Inequities

- Historical/Intergenerational
- SDOH/Individual level
- SDOH/Lifecourse, Structural factors
- Racism
- Implementation efficacy
  - Iatrogenic harm
  - Failure to act in the face of need
  - Disrespectful, stress inducing care
  - Overburdened, underfunded, incoherent systems
Inequities are a complex phenomenon

“(Con)tributaries” to inequity
What does this history and its present-day effects mean for action to produce equity? How do we repair the effects of such an adverse history so that we can achieve equity?

How do we speed the improvement in the Black rate so as to get to parity and silence the voices who think it is OK to go the extra mile to speed progress for white babies but not Babies of Color?

How do we correct the imbalance that white privilege creates?

How do we become anti-racist in a climate where some people are emerging in their understanding of its existence and its virulence, while others are retrenching within white supremacy?
The Bottom Line:

• Inequities are the epitome of a “big hairy problem”

• The approaches we currently use to address inequities are inadequate to the task

• The causes of- and cures for inequities in maternal and infant health are much more complex than the methods we employ to address them
Summary

- Disparities in health persist
- Inequities in the conditions that create health persist
- What we are doing now to address disparities is weak and has not resulted in much sustained progress
- The way we do public health is weak and has not resulted in sustained progress
- We need a total reset on how we do public health and address inequities---and we need it NOW
Current Approaches to Addressing Inequities
What are some of the approaches we use to address inequities?

A Sample of Generalized Equity Approaches

1. Doing Nothing
2. Equity After the Fact
3. DEI Outsourcing
4. Cherry-picking
5. Training
6. Organizational Transformation to Equity in All Policies (EiAP)
Reasons for Doing Nothing

- Don’t know what to do
- “Talking loud, but saying nothing”—Believe you are working toward equity, but in reality, are not
- Unaware of the problem of inequities
- Inequity is not a priority
- Inequities are too hard and complex to address
- Belief that you’ve done enough
“Here’s the state-of-the-art gymnasium, here’s the coffee bar and internet cafe ... oh, yeah - and this little thing over here is the new sanctuary.”
Equity should not be an add-on/afterthought

• "Add salt to taste...."
The intervention is conceptualized, planned, and funded; then we begin to think about how we will add “equity”

• Retrofitting equity is near impossible when 80% of all decisions are already made
  • Does it make sense to put in the electrical wiring and pipes after the drywall is installed?
“DEI Outsourcing”
Outsourcing Scenarios

- Select one person to lead all Diversity, equity and inclusion activities
  - Efforts are usually underfunded and under-resourced
  - Position usually lacks power to create and enforce change
  - Position may be focused on mediating EEO complaints

- Organization or Department rides on the coattails of what one equity champion is doing with their team
  - Impacts will be limited in scope and unsustainable
  - Actions and impacts cease when champions leave organization
  - Actions rarely go beyond impact of a team
  - Staff may face burnout from lack of resources and support
    - when they are committed to equity, they will do the work regardless of resources, but will also face derision, stress, overwhelm and burnout

- Assume all People of Color (POC) are knowledgeable about how to achieve equity

- *De facto* assumption that POC should take on the responsibility to promote equity
“Cherrypicking”
Just ignore the parts you don’t like
Decision-making processes that default to the “easy” choices without regard for their limited impact on needs of POC or inequities.
Impact X Feasibility Matrix

A. Easy to do, High Impact
B. Hard to do, High Impact
C. Easy to do, Low Impact
D. Hard to do, Low Impact

"LOW HANGING FRUIT"
“I fully support you getting to Canada and stand with you......

......But there is one condition: you may not travel Northward”

handicap
hinder, impede, incapacitate; to place at a disadvantage:
Cannot change something you are not allowed to talk about.

Talking about— and acknowledgement of Racism are not enough to achieve equity. Anti-racism action is required.

“The struggle is not against white people, it is against RACISM”
“Equity Training”
Available Trainings – an incomplete list

1. Undoing Racism Workshops
2. Results-based Accountability
3. Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)
4. Implicit Association Test (IAT)
5. Implicit Bias training
6. Racial Healing Workshop
7. Attend workshops on threat response, white fragility, internalized racism
8. Attend Social Justice/Reproductive Justice workshops
9. Consciousness raising/disrupting status quo webinars
Potential limitations to training

• Informational vs. Experiential

• Transactional vs Transformational

• Individual behavior vs. Systemic or Structural change

• Temporary vs. Sustained change

• “One size fits all” vs. Matching training to appropriate Stages of Change
“Organizational Transformation to Equity in All Policies (EiAP)”
• Social Change is necessary to achieve EQUITY

• Societies change when its organizations and institutions change

• Organizations and institutions change when they transform aspects of their culture, processes, priorities, resource allocation, relationships, powersharing, etc...

• When these are done within an equity frame and across all sectors, you remove new production of risk/inequities, provide a platform for redressing past harms, and increase probability of achieving equity
Organizational Transformation

Need to think about:

• **What is the target of change?** *(Community members? Your organization? Society?)*

• **In my pursuit of equity, what am I building?** *(vs. What am I doing?/Who did I put in charge?)*

• **Am I appropriately resourcing equity efforts?** *(Time, money, personnel, power, priority)*
Going Deeper: Critique of Current Approaches to Equity
Equity requires:

• Doing the right things

• Doing ALL of the right things, simultaneously

• Doing them right (science-based, respectful, coherent, matching needs, etc...)

• Doing the right things and doing them right for everyone

• Having the capacity to know what the right things are, and to build and then implement them

• Doing robust public health
• “All I need to attain equity is to apply the appropriate evidence-based practice”
“Once we put in place policies that address the social determinants of health, we will achieve equity”
• It is possible to increase inequities while improving social determinants.

• Social Determinants of health must also be addressed with an equity lens.
Coherence/Incoherence in public health

All the pieces fit, but does the big picture make sense?
Socio-Ecological Model

Upstream/More population-based impacts

Downstream More individual-based impacts
**Current approaches to equity:**

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<th>Summary:</th>
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<td>Rarely consider all aspects of the complexity of the problem.</td>
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<td>Are rarely holistic, are often piecemeal and incoherent</td>
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<td>Rarely go deep enough to make a dent</td>
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<td>Are under-resourced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are not systematically planned, often opportunistic</td>
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<td>Rarely result in sustained and consistent reductions in inequities</td>
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<td>Assume equity exists &quot;Out there&quot;—rather than assessing and changing the ways that organizational processes and decisions maintain inequities or inhibit equity</td>
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How Should We Approach Achievement of Equity?
EQUALITY
EQUITY
LIBERATION
Imagine if this was HEALTH SYSTEM instead of a baseball game.
Necessary Actions to Address Inequity

- Remediate
  - SDOH/Individual level
- Remove
- Repair
- Restructure
- Provide
  - Implementation efficacy ("Doing the right things right")
Next:

Part II:
Introduction to Key Equity Tools, Concepts and Frameworks

Strategies, Tools and Capacities Needed to Achieve Equity in Maternal and Infant Health (and how to evaluate it)
 Homework:
Which of these characterize you, your team, your agency, and your networks?
(select all that apply)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>We are just starting, trying to figure it out</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>We have the best of intentions, but the larger organization does not provide needed sanction, support, resources and structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>We all had equity training</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>We've assigned someone in the organization to oversee equity issues</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>We include community in planning, development and decision making</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>We use the right language in our communications</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>We assessed all of our policies and procedures and changed them to ensure equity</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>We address historic ills and level the playing field for most disadvantaged populations</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>We provide resources to the community to organize dialog, study, learning ideation in preparation for “coming to the decision-making table”</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Our physical environments are welcoming to all groups</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>We are working to improve environmental and social conditions, so populations have less exposure to risks</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>We restructured our organization to accommodate the needs of the most vulnerable populations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Our workforce looks like the populations we serve</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Our organization provides an appropriate level of funding to achieve equity</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>We leverage our power, resources and relationships to encourage and support network partners to embrace equity</td>
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