Developing Health Disparities Researchers

Research Centers Collaborative Network Workshop: Aging, Race, and Health Disparities

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What is the Goal?

**Domains of Causes**
- Environmental
- Sociocultural
- Behavioral
- Biological

**Disparate Outcomes**
- Higher incidence or prevalence
- Premature or excessive mortality
- Greater global burden of disease
- Poorer health behaviors
- Worse outcomes on validated self-reported measures reflecting daily functioning or symptoms.

**Domains of Potential Remedies or Interventions**
- Environmental
- Sociocultural
- Behavioral
- Biological
Who is going to achieve the goal?

Health Disparities-Solving Superpowers
- Masters of multiple data collection methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative
- Able to untangle complex, multifactorial causation in a single logistic regression model

Alas . . . . We are all mere mortals and have to pursue the career development of health disparities researchers in less extraordinary, but still creative ways

Meet South Africa’s Superhero scientists Cosmic Dawn, Bones and Nitre

The Mail & Guardian (mg.co.za)
Identifying Interested Young Scientists - Everywhere

Multifactorial Problems Require Multidisciplinary Solutions

- Medicine
- Nutrition Science
- Behavior Science
- Nursing
- Bioethics
- Epidemiology
- Medical Sociology
- Economics
- Biostatistics
Rigor of the Science of Health Disparities

• Exposure to prevailing frameworks and conceptual models
• Defined tenets of community-based participatory research
• Familiarity with the lexicon of health disparities
• Lifecourse perspective
  • Timing and impact of potential causative factors
  • Timing and intensity of potential outcomes
Packaging and Polishing

- The Deep South Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR)
- Funded by NIA (5P30AG031054)
- 4-site consortium
  - UAB
  - Morehouse School of Medicine
  - Tuskegee University
  - University of Alabama

- 1-year pilot awards
- Grant-writing workshops
- Manuscript-writing retreats
- Statistical consultations
- National opportunities for presentations and project feedback
Fix the Researcher System

• Make elimination of health disparities an institutional goal
  • Quality of care metrics
  • Involve community partners
• Implement evidence-based disparities interventions (or test promising approaches) in patient care
Funding and Institutional Resources

• Established community partnerships
• Funded recruitment core for minoritized populations
  • Conduct recruitment using tailored approaches for population subgroups
  • Incubator for novel recruitment techniques to advance the science of recruitment
• Methodological expertise
• Thorough and reliable data collection in health systems
  • Patient characteristics - Race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc
  • Social determinants
Diversifying the Workforce

UAB/Tuskegee Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (UAB/TU FIRST) Partnership (NIH U54)

- Cluster-based hiring
- Non-mentoring logistical support
- Career advocacy
- Bi-directional partnership with minority-serving institutions

https://sites.uab.edu/benjamincarverfirst - 1U54CA267746-01
What’s Next?

- Establishment of best practices for health disparities career development
- Institutional partnerships and sharing
- Funding for the infrastructure for health disparities research
- Shared accountability for addressing health disparities
Acknowledgments

• Funding

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Thank you!