



Abstract Title: The Pan-Canadian health inequalities reporting initiative

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Introduction/Background

At the World Health Assembly in 2012, Canada, along with other World Health Organization Member States, endorsed the Rio Political Declaration on the Social Determinants of Health, pledging in part to strengthen monitoring and reporting on health inequalities (World Health Organization, 2011). This prompted collaboration between the Pan-Canadian Public Health Network, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Statistics Canada, and the Canadian Institute for Health Information to undertake the Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Reporting Initiative. The initiative builds on a set of indicators of health inequalities proposed by the Public Health Network in 2010 (Public Health Network, 2010).

Purpose

To strengthen monitoring, reporting, and action on health inequalities in Canada through improved data infrastructure and capacity.

Approach or Action

The initiative has produced two major products. The first is an interactive online Health Inequalities Data Tool on PHAC's Public Health Infobase platform. This user-friendly, web-based tool provides a systematic portrait of the state of health inequalities in Canada and represents the most comprehensive pan-Canadian data resource of its kind currently available. It allows users to find, explore, and download data on health inequalities in Canada.

The second product of the initiative is a national-level narrative report, which focuses on 20 key indicators of health inequality in Canada. The indicators were selected according to a combination of quantitative and qualitative criteria (e.g. the magnitude of inequalities measured, coverage of both downstream and upstream indicators, and policy relevance across jurisdictions). The report covers both population-level measures (e.g. health-adjusted life expectancy) and individual-level measures (e.g. self-assessed health). The report also aligns with federal and provincial/territorial health policy priorities (e.g. mental health, smoking, early childhood development).

Outcomes

The initiative can help researchers and those working in program and policy development to identify the health issues and populations experiencing the most

pronounced inequalities and help generate research questions and hypotheses about the relationships between specific indicators of health status and/or social determinants and many social stratifiers. It can also inform priorities both within and beyond the health sector on actions to reduce health and social inequities, and support monitoring of progress over time.

Conclusions

The Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Reporting Initiative aims to make health inequalities data and evidence more accessible to policy audiences and researchers in order to support priority-setting and decision-making. This tool provides baseline data for ongoing monitoring of progress in reducing health inequalities in Canada.

References

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