

Healthcare Disparities: The Leading Cause for Prematurity and Infant Mortality

Estela Rangel, Kris A. Barnekow, PhD, OTR/L, IMH-E®

Department of Occupational Science and Technology

College of Health Sciences

The infant Introduction

- Infant mortality is defined as the death of an infant before his or her first birthday (CDC, 2019).
- mortality rate helps us understand the overall health of society (CDC, 2019).
- Preterm birth is a leading cause of infant mortality in the United States (Callaghan et al., 2006).
- Despite NICU equipment and medical technology improvements, infant deaths attributed to preterm births has increased over the years among different racial/ethnic groups (Greenfield & Klawetter, 2016)
- The percentage of preterm births ranges among different racial/ethnic groups unveiling the health disparities affecting racial and ethnic minorities in the United States (Sparks, 2009).

Methods

I conducted a literature review looking to answer the question, Is prematurity still one of the leading causes for infant mortality? I began looking over various research articles dating as far back as 2006.

- Using a Guided Search Grid to help maintain organization and refine my search,
- I prepared annotated bibliographies for the articles to help refine my search, and
- as the search for articles became more refined, I noticed a pattern throughout the articles.

Credit to MCH: "The first author was a research intern in the MCH Pipeline Program during the work reported in this poster."

Guided Search Grid

SEARCH TERMS/PHRASES	NUMBER OF RESULTS	FILTERS APPLIED	HOW DID THIS CHANGE YOUR SEARCH	RELEVANCY OF RESULTS
-Prematurity -infant mortality	26,162 results	-last 3 months -risk factors -premature birth -infant, newborn	92 results	Articles discuss treatments and complications related to premature births.
QUESTION FOR SEARCH 1 – WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOU COULD BREAK THIS TOPIC DOWN INTO PIECES OR FIND SYNONYMS FOR SEARCHING?				
Some ways I could break down this topic is by focusing and using terms such as: social/economic/racial determinants, and health disparities. I can also begin to narrow my search by making sure my articles are focusing on WI.				
-premature babies -health disparities -Wisconsin	1,054 results	-refined dates of articles to 2009 – 2019 -infant mortality -public health	177 results	Articles focused on the rates of prematurity and infant mortality in WI.
QUESTION FOR SEARCH 2 – WHAT ARE NEW KEYWORDS OR CONCEPTS YOU FOUND IN THIS SEARCH?				
Some new keywords that I began to notice while searching through articles were the terms black-white disparities, social determinants and racial determinants.				
- premature babies -health disparities -Wisconsin -black – white disparities	422 results	-refined dates of articles to 2009 – 2019 -race -health disparities -preterm birth -health status disparities -black studies -women’s studies -infant mortality	78 results	Articles focus on the racial/social/economic disparities affecting minorities. Specifically discussing how these disparities affect the rates of premature births and infant mortality.
QUESTION FOR SEARCH 3 – WHAT MIGHT YOU ADD OR SUBTRACT FROM THIS SEARCH TO GET MORE RELEVANT RESULTS?				
Something that I might add to this search is a filter or term such as maternal and child health. In order to find more relevant articles that closely relate to MCH.				
- premature babies -health disparities -Wisconsin -black – white disparities -maternal health -child health	295 results	-refined dates of articles to 2009 – 2019 -MEDLINE/PubMed -infant mortality -preterm birth -pregnancy	11 results	Articles closely relate to the health disparities affecting minorities today as well as a look on the rates of premature births.
QUESTION FOR SEARCH 4 – WHEN YOU FIND AN ARTICLE THAT WORKS FOR YOU, HOW MIGHT YOU USE THAT TO FIND OTHER ARTICLES LIKE IT?				
After finding an article that relates to my topic, I might look at some of the key terms that were listed in the beginning to use are search terms. If there is a term that I don’t understand looking up the definition can help me get a better grasp at the concept and open up more doors to more articles.				

Conclusions/Next Steps:

One article described the affects of healthcare disparities and the lack of access to healthcare as leading factors for prematurity and infant mortality. In comparison to non-Hispanic Whites (NHW) and Asian mothers, “mothers of all other racial/ethnic groups are more likely to receive inadequate prenatal care” (Sparks, 2009). Research has also found that black infants in hyper segregated areas have a higher chance of being born prematurely. This finding reveals the stressful life conditions many minorities face while living in highly segregated areas (Alio et al, 2010).

These trends allow us to step back and refine our healthcare system.

- It’s important to be aware of the health disparities that racial/ethnic groups face when it comes to practicing healthcare (Sparks, 2009).
- Acknowledgement of an issue can begin the change in enhancing treatments and access (CDC, 2019).
- Creation of accessible programs for at-risk mothers that promote accessible health services may be a potential solution (Sparks, 2009).

References:

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2. Callaghan, W., MacDorman, M., Rasmussen, S., Qin, C., & Lackritz, E. (2006). The contribution of preterm birth to infant mortality rates in the United States. *Pediatrics*, 118(4), 1566-1573.
3. Greenfield, J., & Klawetter, S. (2016). Parental Leave Policy as a Strategy to Improve Outcomes among Premature Infants. *Health & Social Work*, 41(1), 17-23.
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