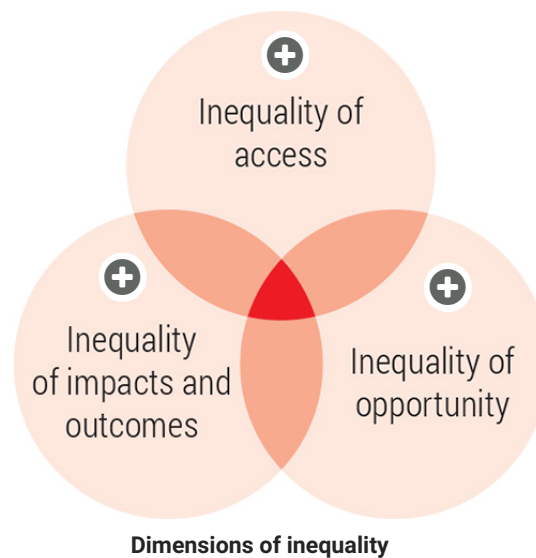


Topic 1: Health disparities and inequalities

When prioritising public health issues and considering whether action should be taken, and the scale of such actions, public health practitioners must first examine health inequalities and disparities. Throughout the literature, the terms health inequalities and disparities both essentially refer to the differences in health status that can result from social, economic and geographic influences that are avoidable, unfair and unnecessary (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2005). In the Australian context the term health inequalities is more widely used, whereas in the United States the term health disparities is the dominant term.

Health inequalities can be divided into three main dimensions. As shown in the figure below, these dimensions overlap, and all contribute to individuals, communities and populations experiences in health inequalities. Click the plus signs on the below diagram to reveal a more detailed description of each dimension.



Health disparity

In Australia there are many vulnerable groups who risk poorer health outcomes than the general population. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bear a greater burden of disease and have lower life expectancy than their non-indigenous counterparts (AIHW, 2016; 2018; Mazel, 2017). Indigenous peoples worldwide continue to experience health, social and economic disadvantage and these combined indicators are evidence of a health crisis in the indigenous population that is linked to systemic disadvantage over many decades. In an effort to improve life expectancy and lessen the burden of disease, a number of public health strategies and national frameworks now embed a human rights-based approach to achieving health equality.

Vulnerable populations

Like indigenous peoples, there are many other vulnerable groups at risk of being exposed to human rights abuses including (but not limited to): women and girls; children; refugees; minorities; people with disabilities; the elderly; and LGBTI people. From a public health perspective these groups would be considered priority population groups for public health services. Action to address the issues of these groups need to be shared by various government sectors at federal and state levels, local communities, non-government organisations and charities and community-based organisations.

In order to improve health outcomes for vulnerable groups public health strategies need to take into account the interests and needs of vulnerable populations within all areas including policy, research, program design and program evaluations. In practice we need to be focusing on three core principles of availability, accessibility and acceptability.

The extent to which we protect human rights in Australia depends on the values of the people. We tend to focus on abuses of human rights overseas however there are many abuses of human rights taking place in our own backyard.



Required reading

In this reading you will explore the three dimensions of inequality and a checklist that was developed to help health care practitioners plan equity focussed solutions.



- [People, Places, Processes: Reducing health inequalities through balanced health promotion approaches](#). Part I: The equity triangle lens, pp. 6–15.



Discussion: Identifying inequality in disadvantaged groups

In this discussion you will identify different types of inequality in each of the three domains explored in this topic: access; opportunity; impacts and outcomes.

Your task

1. Choose a group of people within Australia that experience inequality.
2. Outline the different types of inequality that might be experienced by your chosen group and note these down.
3. Outline at least 3 different types of inequality for each domain and note these down.
4. Post your response to the padlet below.
5. At the end of the week, review your classmates' responses.

Guidelines

- This activity is not graded but is an essential part of your learning. Your submission will be reviewed by your tutor, though you may not receive specific feedback.
- You should spend 20–30 minutes on this activity.
- Complete this activity by Thursday before 12:00 midday (AEST).

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2023 PHE5PUH T2 Week 3, Topic 1: Identifying inequality in disadvantaged groups

In this discussion you will identify different types of inequality in each of the three domains explored in this topic: access; opportunity; impacts and outcomes.



Identifying inequality
in homeless people

Anonymous 12d
Identifying inequality in
homeless people

According to the Australian
Bureau of Statistics, 165,000
people are homeless in
Australia on any given night.
The homeless experience

Made with :Padlet

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