

Symposium C5: Methodological Challenges in Intervention Research

Inclusion of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in Intervention Research: Barriers, Motivators, and Strategies

Maryellen D. Brisbois, MS, RN, PHCNS-BC, University of Massachusetts Worcester, Worcester, MA

Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the NIH Revitalization Act and the NCMHD, describe common barriers to participation of ethnic minority groups in intervention studies, identify challenges for researchers, and provide strategies for recruitment and retention.

Background: The mandate for inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities in research studies by the National Institutes for Health (NIH) in 1993 has succeeded by increasing accountability in research design, institutional review board approval, and federal research funding. Despite these accomplishments, persistent underrepresentation of racial and ethnic groups in intervention studies makes it difficult to identify similarities or differences in subpopulations with similar health care concerns.

Approach: The use of the Ethno-medical model of research participation will be presented as a potential framework to address multifaceted sources that limit or improve racial and ethnic minority participation in intervention studies.

Major Points and Rationale: While the population in the United States is growing more diverse; there is increased concern that research findings in white populations may be misleading if applied to other racial or ethnic groups. The current one size fits all standard of care is not sufficient and it is crucial to understand health disparities in minority groups in order to improve outcomes.

Conclusions: The National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, (NCMHD) established within the NIH in 2000, provided an overarching goal that requires equitable selection of research participants. Subsequently, outcomes of intervention studies must address differences in subpopulations by including multiple factors related to culture, behavior, health care, and health care policy.