

A novel framework for equity-focused analysis: EQUALS M+

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Introduction

- Effective equity-focused analysis is essential to understand how interventions affect disadvantaged groups [1].
- PROGRESS-Plus is a commonly used health inequalities framework for undertaking equity-focused reviews [2].
- We aimed to review the use of PROGRESS-Plus in health inequalities primary care studies and propose a novel framework which addresses the limitations identified.

Methods

- We examined articles included in EQUALISE review of interventions to address inequalities in primary care [1].
- We mapped dimensions to PROGRESS-Plus and identified dimensions not covered, then proposed a novel framework using an inter-disciplinary team approach.

Results

Several gaps were identified between PROGRESS-Plus and published literature. There was no:

1. Explicit mention of inclusion health groups.
2. Consideration of multiple disadvantage.
3. Differentiation between gap and targeted interventions.

Figure 1 – Health equity dimensions included

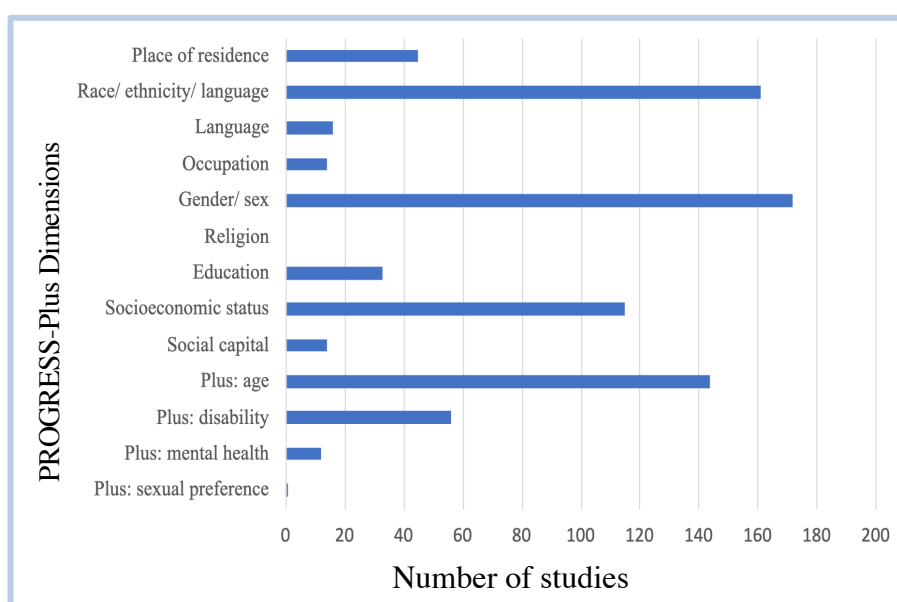
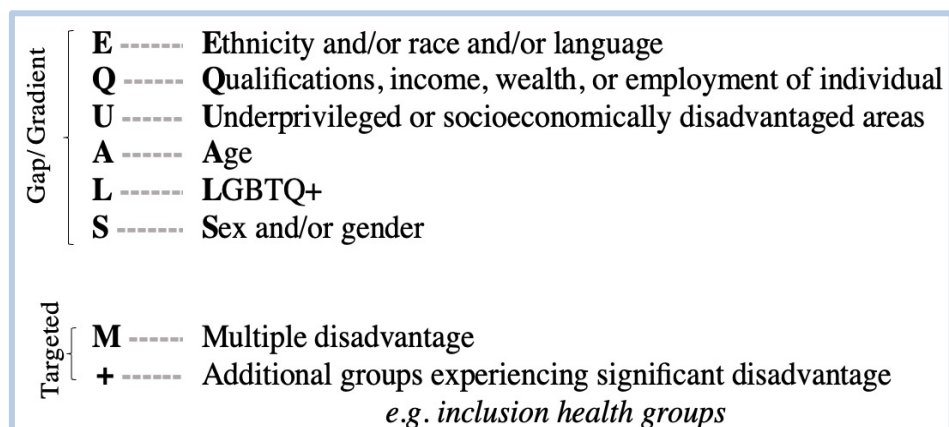


Figure 2 – EQUALS M+ framework



Discussion

- The current framework oversimplifies the complexities of health inequities.
- These findings are similar to previous review of PROGRESS-Plus [3].
- EQUALS M+ aims to address the limitations identified and assist with further equity-evidence synthesis (Figure 2).
- Examples of the + component include prisoners, asylum seekers, and homeless populations.

Conclusion

- High-quality evidence assessing what works to address complex disadvantage is needed to guide policy and prevent widening inequalities.
- EQUALS M+ provides a useful aid-memoire for researchers when considering health equity research.
- Further research is needed to validate EQUALS M+.

References

- [1] A Gkiouleka et al. “Reducing health inequalities through general practice” *The Lancet Public Health* 2023. 8(6):E463-472.
- [2] The Cochrane Collaboration, PROGRESS-plus, 2023. <https://methods.cochrane.org/equity/projects/evidence-equity/progress-plus>. (Accessed 1 August 2023).
- [3] J. O’Neill, H. Tabish, V. Welch, et al., *Applying an Equity Lens to Interventions: Using PROGRESS Ensures Consideration of Socially Stratifying Factors to Illuminate Inequities in Health*, vol. 67, 2014, pp. 56–64.