



September 29, 2022

NIH Backs the Institute for Health Equity Research to study Structural Racism in Health Care

Today, we have incredibly exciting news to share: Mount Sinai's [Institute for Health Equity Research](#) (IHER) has received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to embark on a five-year research project to identify, measure, and analyze structural racism in health care settings. Titled "*Dismantling Structural Racism Underlying the organization of ambulatory PracTices: an observational study of clinical desegregation*," the "DISRUPT" study will be led by **Nina Bickell, MD, MPH**, Professor of Population Health Science and Policy at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; **Carol Horowitz, MD, MPH**, Dean for Gender Equity in Science and Medicine at Icahn Mount Sinai; and **Lynne D. Richardson, MD**, Professor of Emergency Medicine and Population Health Science and Policy at Icahn Mount Sinai—the latter two of whom also serve as co-directors of IHER.

This first-of-its-kind project will look at structural racism through the lens of health care segregation in ambulatory practices and work to discover its impacts on quality and access, delivery of care, and overall health outcomes. While health care segregation isn't always visible to the naked eye, Richardson told us that segregation of ambulatory care is like residential segregation.



“It’s very much baked into the way our nation’s care system is set up,” she said. “Medical training programs are often located in urban, disadvantaged areas where the patients might not really feel empowered to refuse to be seen by a student or trainee if they wish. Meanwhile, a few blocks away, in higher-income neighborhoods patients with access to better health insurance might be seen by more experienced physicians.”

In these beginning stages, the DISRUPT researchers are gathering and analyzing ambulatory visit data for 12 million patients from five academic medical centers across New York City to evaluate the current level of segregation in medical, pediatric, and OB/GYN practices and its impact on quality metrics. The team will then use simulations to explore how desegregating or “unifying” these practices—so that patients have equal access to them regardless of insurance status—could potentially impact outcomes.

The research team will also partner with the Road Map [Strategy 2 team](#) to record and assess their work to unify ambulatory practices, a collaboration that strategy lead, **Jeremy Boal, MD**, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer of the Mount Sinai Health System and President of Mount Sinai Beth Israel and Downtown, said “will help us both do the work better and disseminate what we’re learning with our peer institutions in other health systems, so we can maximize outcomes for not only Mount Sinai’s patients but for all.”



Ultimately, the DISRUPT study aims to increase understanding of how unequal access to health care impacts patient outcomes and produce a blueprint for unifying practices and reducing disparities. However, Richardson reminds us that this study will not single-handedly solve this issue. “Much of this is within Mount Sinai’s control, and we’re very committed to doing what we can within our sphere,” she said. “However, these issues are also larger than us and long-term success will likely require widespread legislative and regulatory changes to our national health care system.”

We look forward to following the study as it progresses. In the meantime, we invite you to join us at an upcoming event listed below.

All the best,

Shawn and Angela

Join Us for an Upcoming Event

Chats for Change: On the Fence: White Privilege

Does the word white create discomfort among those who are not used to being defined or described by their race? Does the word privilege, especially for poor and rural white people, sound like it does not belong to them—like a word that suggests they have never struggled? Join Ann-Gel Palermo, DrPH and Alia Barnes, MPH on

Tuesday, October 4th from 12-1pm as we unpack how white privilege can be a built-in advantage and separate from one's level of income or effort. Register on [Zoom](#).

Upcoming Latino Heritage Month and Disabilities Awareness Month Events:

To see the full list of activities for Hispanic/Latinx Heritage month, login to [Mount Sinai Daily on Firstup](#). You may need to login using your Mount Sinai email and password.

Virtual Bi-Lingual Tai Chi with Sifu Lafi

Wednesday, October 5, 5 – 6 pm

[Register here](#)

Disparities Among LGBTQ People with Disabilities

Thursday, October 6, 12 Noon - 1 pm

[Register here](#)

[Road Map for Action](#)

[Past Bulletins](#)