

Topic 2: If poor socioeconomic conditions largely explain poor health, what role should the health sector play in the task of improving the health of minority groups?

Groups:

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The health sector does have an important role to play, but there must be an emphasis on partnership working. Health sector workers cannot do anything without partnership. This is especially important in relation to prevention strategies. There is a need to facilitate projects that are *owned* by our communities. The role of health sector workers should be to work with communities to make this happen. There is still very little outreach. This must be strengthened. Obstacles to engaging with the most marginalised groups must be overcome.

The ways in which practitioners take on board research findings is a political process. Researchers must get involved with this political process. They must take into account the practical realities at ground level and look at how needs can be met in real life situations. Researchers must also make their findings more accessible to practitioners. There must be more attention to the ways of involving community members in the research process, and more attention given to the knowledge (the so-called 'grey literature') generated by community-based organisations via their field-level experience. Currently this type of knowledge is not valued and it does not influence policy. Researchers can play a role in strengthening and legitimising this kind of evidence.

A better understanding of the inter-linkages between socioeconomic factors and ethnicity is needed. Attention must also be given to the ways in which cultural factors may hamper progress (the issue of women's disadvantaged position in some ethnic groups was raised).

Racism is persistent across generations and time, despite much societal change. How can this be tackled? How can 'resilience' be built up in those who are victims of racism to lessen the long-term impacts on health and well-being?