



CIHR IRSC

Institute of Population and Public Health

Executive Summary of Strategic Plan (2009-2014)



Health Equity Matters



Canadian Institutes
of Health Research

Instituts de recherche
en santé du Canada

Canada

Preamble

The state of public and population health science is shifting from understanding social determinants of health to examining the impacts of multi-level program and policy interventions on health improvements. This renewed focus requires researchers and other stakeholders to interrogate pathways to health equity and inequity. Furthermore, this shift reinforces the need to understand the complexity of interventions within complex adaptive systems and as embedded in their socio-cultural and political contexts. This strategic plan builds on the achievements and partnerships developed by the Institute of Population and Public Health over the last several years. The plan reflects an enhanced research and knowledge translation capacity in Canada and aims to directly address these emerging trends in the field of population and public health.

Vision

To be recognized as a world-class Institute that demonstrates excellence, innovation and leadership in the generation and application of population and public health evidence to improve health and promote equity in Canada and globally

Mission

To improve the health of populations and promote health equity in Canada and globally through research and its application to policies, programs and practice in public health and other sectors

Values

The Institute has identified the following values to guide its research and knowledge translation initiatives.

- Excellence, relevance and innovation of funded research
- Evidence-based approach to knowledge translation that bridges learning across regional, provincial/territorial, national and international settings
- Reciprocal and respectful partnerships that span the cycle of knowledge production to knowledge use
- Leadership to mobilize and foster commitment for population and public health research in Canada and globally
- Transparency and accountability

Strategic Research Priorities

The Institute's four strategic research priorities will foster excellence and innovation in population and public health research that aims to improve population health while reducing inequities in Canada and globally. They are also intended to contribute to CIHR's overall strategic goals.

IPPH Strategic Research Priorities

- Pathways to health equity¹
- Population health interventions
- Implementation systems for population health interventions in public health and other sectors
- Theoretical and methodological innovations

¹ Health equity suggests that everyone can reach their full health potential and that they should not be disadvantaged from attaining this potential as a result of their class, socioeconomic status or other socially determined circumstance (Whitehead and Dahlgren 2006).

1. Pathways to health equity

Existing and emergent inequities are reinforced or mitigated through both intended and unintended population health influences that operate at all system levels (from micro to macro); and across sectors and geographic borders. This priority will focus on understanding pathways to promote health equity within and between countries.

- Goal:** To further our understanding of pathways to health equity
- Objectives:**
- To support research that examines how the interplay of biological, social, cultural, and environmental determinants affects health and how this interplay changes across the life course at multiple levels of social aggregation and through significant societal transitions
 - To foster studies to investigate how intersections of micro- and macro-environments enhance equities or reduce inequities in the health of populations

2. Population health interventions

Population health interventions can include policy, programmatic and resource distribution approaches. These interventions are often complex. Examining what types of population health interventions promote health and health equity is an important area of inquiry. Substantive priority areas for population health intervention research will be identified with partners.

- Goal:** To examine the impact of complex population health interventions on health and health equity
- Objectives:**
- To foster research that examines the impact of population health interventions on health and health equity
 - To support the application of novel measures, research designs, and frameworks in studies of population health interventions

3. Implementation systems for population health interventions in public health and other sectors

Population health interventions are implemented within organizational, policy, and program delivery systems. These systems include many key elements such as inter-organizational, intersectoral and inter-jurisdictional governance structures; leadership supports; and information exchange mechanisms. This priority interrogates the reciprocal influences of implementation systems on population health interventions, in both public health and other sectors such as education, housing and natural resources. Of particular interest is how these reciprocal influences may strengthen or mitigate the impacts of population health interventions on health and health equity.

- Goal:** To examine how implementation systems for population health interventions may strengthen or weaken the impact of population health interventions on health and health equity
- Objectives:**
- To support research that contributes to our understanding of scaling-up processes for population health interventions that enhance health and health equity
 - To foster research that examines intersectoral implementation options for population health interventions and features of these implementation systems

4. Theoretical and methodological innovations

Leading edge studies to address the first three priorities will require theoretical and methodological innovations, informed by diverse disciplinary fields. These theoretical and methodological innovations will in turn need to be incorporated into knowledge generation, knowledge synthesis and knowledge integration initiatives. They can also contribute to the development of frameworks for population health and global health ethics.

Goal: To stimulate theoretical and methodological innovations in knowledge generation, knowledge synthesis, and knowledge integration for population and public health

Objectives:

- To foster development and refinement of theories and methods for the examination of population health interventions and implementation systems to promote equity and reduce inequities in health
- To foster the development and refinement of ethical frameworks for population health interventions in Canada and globally

Knowledge Translation, Partnerships, and Capacity Building

The Institute will address each of these strategic research priorities by fostering excellence in knowledge translation, mobilizing strategic and innovative partnerships, and strengthening capacity for research excellence.

Goals:

- To support and accelerate the translation of research on population health interventions and implementation systems into practice, programs, and policies within the health and other sectors
- To build on existing and establish new strategic partnerships that support knowledge generation and translation efforts by researchers and decision-makers working in the field of population and public health in Canada and globally
- To respond to emerging needs for knowledge generation and knowledge translation (including knowledge synthesis, dissemination, exchange, and ethically-sound application of knowledge) that are related to the protection or promotion of the health of the population
- To increase the capacity of the Canadian health research community to lead and collaborate on cutting-edge population and public health research and knowledge translation, both nationally and internationally

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