Results from University of Michigan Survey Regarding Priorities for Population Health Research

September 22, 2015
(N=110 Respondents)

EXAMPLE SURVEY RESULTS

RESEARCH AREA 1–ROOT CAUSES OF PROBLEMS, IMPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS/COMMUNITIES

Social Determinants – General Research Questions

- Does poverty impact children from different racial/ethnic groups differently in terms of health outcomes?
- Determinants of improvement in self-reported health
- What percent of non-health care investments accrue to health outcomes...so that a true health budget can be established?
- Research linking multiple social priorities and illustrating alignment
- Identifying the key levers among the social determinants of health that would trigger ripple effects in eliminating inequalities in multiple systems that contribute to health inequalities

Socioeconomic Determinants – Income, Education, Housing

- Deeper understanding between the intersection of health and wealth
- The role of mass incarceration in health disparities in the US
- As a society, where can we get better ROI: education or plain wages increases?
- Understanding causality with relationship to the protective influence of education on health
- Role of educational interventions during K-12 on health disparities
- The effects of housing on ANYTHING

Racism, Segregation and Immigration

- How does historic racism (structural and individual) impact population health?
- Effects of structural racism on health outcomes
- How segregation produces health disparities
- Increased understanding on factors impacting health among immigrants and their variability across immigrant populations
- How does discrimination against immigrants affect physical and mental health?

Early Childhood/Family

- Increase understanding of childhood adverse childhood experiences and risk for mental and cardiovascular risk in adulthood
- Increased understanding how to mitigate the effect of childhood trauma on morbid obesity in adult women
- Why do youth born into similar low social and economic circumstances have very different life outcomes?
- Does poor nutrition early in life have an irreversible impact on brain/neuro development?
- What is the effect of depression in mothers, on the healthy social, emotional development of their children

Food/Obesity

- Evidence of multilevel determinants of obesity and diabetes
• Would reducing obesity reduce the number of older Americans with multiple chronic conditions and their health care costs?
• Does elimination of food/beverage marketing to children impact food preference?
• Seasonal fluctuations in food insecurity
• Causal link between healthy food access and high school graduation
• Relationship of the availability of healthy food and vegetables to lower socioeconomic neighborhoods to health status

Social Psychological Factors
• Interaction between long term environmental exposure (e.g. indoor air quality) and stress
• How does stigma (race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, SES) affect health?
• How to reverse hopelessness in impoverished communities
• How does the experience of cultural isolation and depression affect health disparities in a population
• Better understanding in the role of inequity in making people feel more and more impoverished even when absolute income and wealth are rising
• Increased understanding of the role of social cohesion in mental health conditions

Community/Neighborhood/Contextual Factors
• How does geography impact population health apart from other variables like income and education?
• The role of the built environment in urban areas in health/illness
• A stronger body of evidence around the contributions of neighborhood conditions to health, as opposed to individual or households attributes
• How does urban living contribute to the rise of type 2 diabetes?
• Role of community organizing in advancing health equity
• What evidence exists regarding the impact of community health assessments and improvement plans and their impact on the needs and inequities experienced by subpopulations within communities?

Health Risk Behaviors
• How can behaviors be reinforced or changed when the individual is in a family/living setting that does not support?
• How can employers effectively motivate employees in taking charge of their own health through exercise, better nutrition and other habits?
• Aspects of behavioral economics most relevant to burden of health disease in a population.
• How public health and healthcare should respond to e-cigarettes
• What are the major drivers of the epidemic of opioid addiction in the U.S.?
• The epidemiology of and causal models of the growing trend of substance abuse in all segments of communities

Communications/Public Opinion
• How to craft messages tailored to different cultural groups.
• What about pop health motivates conservatives the most re spending and policy action?
• Why are conservatives so opposed to family planning?
• Do changes in public opinion about public policy strategies have an impact on policy action?
• Understanding how to overcome public misunderstanding of vaccines an vaccine research

Physiology/Genetics
• Impact of social conditions on gene expression that affects health
• Endocrine disrupting chemicals and differential exposure.

**Health Care/Health Care Reform**
• What are potential negative consequences of health care delivery system reform?
• Increased understanding barriers to prevention of disease and management of health
• How social determinants and clinical interventions interact to shape disparities in health
• Understanding how small primary care practices can achieve high levels of performance in a value-based context
• Increased understanding of what does and doesn't work in terms of wellness program lifestyle interventions
• How can payment for health care and social services be best integrated to improve patient outcomes?

**Public Health Systems/Cross Sector Collaboration**
• What are the workforce skills and gaps needed for local health departments to effectively address population health?
• What are the best ways for local and state public health to collaborate with non-governmental organizations like business, faith-based and non profits?
• How does the integration of health care, public health, behavioral health, housing and human services lead to better outcomes for overall health and social well-being?
• Modeling the health and economic benefits to clinical medicine and public health integration
• Increased understanding of the use of similar metrics by health departments and health systems in measuring population health improvement

**Other**
• The role of climate change in producing or maintaining health disparities
• Calculation of health adjusted life expectancy
• What technologies are more adoptable by young people?
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RESEARCH AREA 2 – INTERVENTIONS AND POLICY ACTION

Impact of General Types of Interventions:
- High value policies and/or interventions that have been proven to reduce inequities
- What can employers do to reduce health inequities?
- How to reduce racism and other forms of social stigmatization in the larger culture.
- How to shift wealth distribution to eliminate poverty
- The impact of economic and education policies on health in the short and long term
- Research aimed at improving school performance for inner city youth?
- How to increase purchasing demand for healthy foods in low income communities
- How can behavioral economics be leveraged to foster uptake of efficacious, health-promoting and economically advantageous (to individuals) choices?

Impact of Specific Interventions:
- What is the net impact on health of policies to increase physical activity, such as bicycle lanes and city-bike programs?
- Which poverty reduction efforts actually work to reduce poverty and improve health?
- Impact of living wage laws
- Enforcement of housing codes: impacts on childhood asthma and lead poisoning
- The impact of availability of affordable housing on public health
- Elements of wellness programs that actually have sustained impact on health status
- What is the impact of very low cost but high quality, high speed broadband on health in a very low income population?
- Interventions to increase the use of LARCs
- What are effective early interventions to address newly diagnosed mental illness?
- Impact of Medicaid expansion on health access for reentry population (criminal justice involved)
- How can we increase medication adherence through community support?
- Policies to mitigate over-prescription of opioid painkillers

Impact of Interventions Related to Obesity, Food, Nutrition, and Physical Activity:
- The impact of a tax on sugar sweetened beverages on obesity in different socio-demographic groups
- How to establish an incentive structure government can use to attract markets to food deserts
- Use of built environmental and health in all policies approaches to improving physical activity and reducing obesity
- How to use schools and other social institutions to help improve children’s eating behavior
- Programming during the school day that increases physical activity among youth

Interventions for Specific Sociodemographic Groups and Populations:
- How to tailor interventions to different cultural groups
- What interventions actual work to improve education for African Americans living in poverty?
- What sexual health education programs work best with Hispanic youth living in a border city?
- Further examination of the Hispanic paradox and how that can be applied to other immigrant groups in supportive services
- Identifying effective approaches and models for engaging lower income men in health promotion/disease prevention activities
• Identifying more effective ways for ethnic organizations to truly communicate and partner with mainstream
• public health organizations whose messaging and approach is not resonating with both ethnic community
• members and their elected officials.
• Best practices or evidence based interventions to reach people in the beginning of a chronic condition

Community/System-Level Interventions/Cross-Sector Collaborations
• Do policy, system and environment (PSE) changes/interventions for various health issues (i.e. obesity, tobacco) at a community level result in improved health?
• What impact has the ‘health in all policies’ approach had on health?
• Social and environmental interventions to promote health behavior (i.e. diet, physical activity, smoking)
• What are best ways to build community connectedness?
• What are best ways for local and state public health to collaborate with non-governmental organizations
• What community health worker models (e.g., clinic-based, NGO-based, housing-based) are most effective?
• How do best encourage hierarchical organizations to engage in collaborative leadership with their local communities?

Cost-Effectiveness/ROI Research:
• What are the most cost effective community change strategies?
• What is the cost effectiveness of interventions involving efforts outside of the health care delivery system, and how generalizable are results from one initiative to another?
• Cost-effectiveness of school-based interventions
• Cost-effectiveness of workplace health interventions
• Cost effectiveness of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons
• Cost effectiveness of integrating physical and mental health services

Evaluation Research Regarding Interventions that Involve Health Care and Health Care System:
• Impact of community navigators in health care system
• What is the impact of an information system designed to e-prescribe community resources for self-care and disease management on health and economic vitality of a community?
• Impact of high-deductible plans on health inequities
• What are the best practices for getting hospitals to align their community benefit requirements within a community’s population health plan?
• What is the impact on health outcomes from integrating behavioral health and general primary care?

Public Health Systems:
• Meta analysis of studies of other sectors (transportation, economic development, housing, etc.) to explore
• How public health is viewed and determine strategies for strengthening partnership efforts.
• What are ways that local public health can be more effective partners with external partners?
• What are effective budgeting strategies to support a HiAP approach?
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RESEARCH AREA 3 – HOW TO IMPROVE RESEARCH TRANSLATION AND IMPACT

Research Dissemination to Policymakers, Clinicians and Other Practitioners:

- What approaches to adoption and spread of evidence based practices are most successful?
- Effective ways to scale and replicate effective interventions that address social determinants
- How credible are models/modeling to governmental policy makers?
- Effectiveness of various methods to disseminate research evidence to policy makers
- How is research that goes against conventional wisdom or strongly-held assumptions best communicated to policymakers and their staff?
- What impactful policies addressing population health would have bipartisan support; what coalitions would need to be built?
- How can health system efforts on addressing social needs be made sustainable when there is so much else to do in health care?
- What elements of research are most useful to community advocacy efforts?

Public Communication/Media and Increasing Awareness of Issues and Solutions:

- What are the best communication strategies in describing population health to the public, policy makers and payers?
- How do we best translate the impact of the social determinants of health on overall population health?
- What role/(how effective is) does the entertainment media play in bringing research messages to the general public?
- How to integrate health information into social media.
- How can we tell the story of disadvantaged populations to policy-makers and the general public in ways that would build empathy and political will to support the needed change?
- Most compelling language and messages to build buy-in for specific population health improvement approaches to a politically conservative audience.
- Best practices for communicating with conservative policy makers about health equity issues
- How do community-based organizations gain access to information systems and data that they can contribute and apply to demonstrate impact or to inform practice change?

How to Raise Awareness and Motivate Action

- How do all of us better distinguish between science and the values that may drive alternative responses to that science
- How do you raise awareness about homelessness and inspire compassion and understanding?
- How can research findings be communicated more effectively in terms that get the attention of practitioners?

Identifying and Communicating Best Practices

- Best practice for providing health care to returning incarcerated persons
- Model policies for school districts on sexual health education
- Best practices for youth engagement - especially youth of color so they can become the leaders of tomorrow.
- Best practices/synthesis of evidence about employer-based wellness initiatives
- Best practices for reducing impact of treatment cascade for HIV/AIDS
Research Funding/Priority Setting
- Best practices for getting funders to discontinue interventions/programs that research demonstrates are not effective.
- Effective and acceptable means for transferring funding to prevention activities
- How does policy and translation of research factor into health policy research?
- What would be the impact of policy requiring recipients of grants and philanthropy to receive sufficient funding for information system infrastructure, including hardware, software, and high speed internet access?
- Funding for multi-sector collaborative studies

Research Methods/Approaches
- Can we establish better low cost longitudinal studies to really measure policy and program impact?
- How do we make research results actionable?
- Alternatives to IRBs for public health investigations/evaluations that are not considered "research"
- Identifying how best to use data to inform local and state health policy making
- Best practices for displaying information

Academic Challenges to Research Translation
- How can academics engage in translational research when those activities are inconsistent with tenure and promotion?
- How to incentivize universities to better encourage knowledge exchange
- How to incentivize implementation of evidence-based practices while also balancing the need for innovation.
- How to raise the profile of "grey literature," which is significantly more accessible than peer reviewed literature – and likely more relevant

Evidence-Based Medicine
- What are root causes in community variations in the use of evidence based medicine?
- How to create meaningful continuity of care in primary care when physicians are reluctant to take on the responsibility
- Definition and rationale for primary prevention strategies as integrated into new payment reform systems
- Communicating changes in guidelines for clinical preventive services to increase uptake of the guidelines by health care providers
- Does the makeup of the board deciding on how to use hospital community benefits impact the types of uses of community benefits?

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