

A Delphi Consensus to Prioritize the Next Steps to Address Racial Disparities through Critical Care Research

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Abstract

Nine thought leaders on racial disparities having expertise in critical care clinical practice and/or health disparities research in the US, were invited to a round table modified Delphi meeting to address racial disparities in critical care medicine (CCM) research. A pre meeting and post survey meeting were also executed to obtain more information from the participants.

The key take-aways from this meeting are that a lot of data regarding health disparities in CCM is currently lacking. A larger data pool, achieved by more robust recruitment of minority research participants and standardization of race and ethnicity data, will help in the initial step of uncovering the reasons for health disparities.

Introduction

Disparities in critical care remain poorly understood, making them difficult to address. Documenting these disparities through research should be prioritized, and their extent, impact and potential causes should also be a focus for future research.

We aimed to develop a thought leader consensus with recommendations for future critical care medicine (CCM) research trajectory to document, assess and understand potential disparities that have not been well understood.

Methods and Materials

We used a modified Delphi method to find consensus on recommendations for addressing racial disparities in future critical care research. The steps consisted of a preparation phase, a pre-meeting survey, a roundtable meeting, and a post-meeting survey. Nine thought leaders on racial disparities with expertise in critical care clinical practice or health disparities research in the US were invited to the roundtable meeting.

Do you agree with the following statement?

“The initial focus in reducing healthcare disparities in critical care research should be on increasing the number of minority research participants.”

Yes	100%
No	0%

Do you agree that language preference can impact outcomes in critical illness?

Yes	100%
No	0%

Results

The key revelation from this meeting is the notable deficiency in data concerning health disparities within Critical Care Medicine (CCM), underscoring a pressing need for comprehensive research in this domain. Larger data source, achieved by more robust recruitment of minority research participants and standardization of race and ethnicity data would help in the initial step of uncovering health disparities and their underlying mechanisms (consensus reached with 100% agreement) (Fig 1).

Regarding the action *Defining what changes are needed in CCM research structures and processes that would better equip the field to address health disparities, how would you rate the importance of the following topics?*

	Not important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
Increase in minority researchers	0%	0%	12.5%	50%	37.5%
Education of current researchers	0%	0%	25%	25%	50%
Increase in minority participants	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Community involvement in research	0%	12.5%	12.5%	25%	50%
Other	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%

Collection of language preferences should be part of all research studies in order to expose potential biases and disparities in non-English speakers (consensus reached with 100% agreement) (Fig 1). Engagement of minoritized communities will be essential to obtain involvement of minority subjects in research (consensus reached with 100% agreement) (Fig 1).

Conclusions

Standardization of race, ethnicity, and language data collection, with the goal of increasing minority research participants, is key in understanding health disparities in CCM and its potential causes.



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