

Assignment 2: Addressing a Health Inequality

1. Identify a health inequality that exists in a selected location.
2. Document this inequality with any data that may be available.
3. Describe the inequality and some of its key underlying and proximate determinants using the analytical principles presented in the lectures and in the readings on health inequalities.
4. Identify alternative strategies for addressing this inequality (both short- and long-term) and make some specific recommendations for action that are feasible in the location you have selected.

To complete this assignment, you will need to: (1) select a specific geographical area (e.g., city/state, region, or country) with which you are familiar, either in the United States or internationally; (2) select a health inequality that exists within that area

Some suggested health issues include the following: Health care (antenatal care; maternity care; contraceptive services; immunizations; general health care; chronic disease care; etc.); Health behaviors (tobacco; drugs; diet; lifestyle); Health outcomes (unintended pregnancies/abortions; infant/child health; maternal health; injuries; chronic diseases; disabilities; obesity; etc.).

Some suggested inequalities are as follows: gender, race, regional/urban-rural/neighborhood, economic, educational, ethnic/language groups, minority populations, age groups; etc.

A suggested format for the paper is provided:

1. Introduction: the introductory paragraph should contain the purpose of the memo, the specific health inequality you will discuss, and your recommendation(s) for addressing the problem.
2. Background: the background information (a paragraph or two would probably suffice) provides information and data pertaining to the health inequality and helps to provide an understanding of why the inequality exists and why it is important. This information provides the essential context for your proposed recommendations to come later in the paper.
3. Analysis: the analysis, the most important part of the paper, uses the relevant information to build a logical argument that leads to the proposed recommendation. This may be a quantitative argument (based on numeric findings that support a position), if that is the nature of the issue, or it may be a qualitative argument. While the analysis may focus on a single policy or program alternative, the analysis may also be used to compare and contrast different policy/program alternatives.
4. Recommendation(s): the recommendation(s) for action must be based on and logically flow from the analysis. References to the relevant literature should be cited. The literature review should give guidance on feasibility.
5. Conclusion: the conclusion should be clearly stated and based on the analysis and the recommendations.

Because many of these health inequalities are complex, most of the time there is no right or wrong answer in addressing them. They are often controversial, and recommendation(s) and decisions are sometimes based on imperfect information. Therefore, the most important aspect of this assignment is not the final recommendation(s) that may be made, but rather it is the logic and the quality of the argument.