

Addressing Disparities in Ophthalmic Research: The Time Is Now

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Health disparities research is vital to advancing toward health equity in ophthalmology. In this Viewpoint, the authors introduce a framework for health disparities and health disparities research, give examples of health disparities research, and provide recommendations for achieving equity in ophthalmology through research going forward.



How to use research to explore health disparities.



The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Research Framework helps researchers to organize an appropriate approach to studying health disparities.



Viewpoint on how to advance health disparities research in ophthalmology.

Increasing research funding to study health disparities and for researchers from minority groups.



Funding institutions should prioritize disparities research and researchers from minority groups in the pursuit of health equity.



Private industry-sponsored trials should also prioritize diversity by funding investigators underrepresented in medicine and preferentially awarding funding to investigative teams that show commitment to enrolling patient populations from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds for clinical trials.

Increasing institutional support for researchers from underrepresented minority groups and health disparities researchers.



Protected, funded time for research and the commensurate value of work dedicated to foster the institution's diversity initiatives will support faculty from underrepresented groups and advance them toward success.

Increasing access to ophthalmology databases and artificial intelligence.



The American Academy of Ophthalmology should elevate health disparities research questions and expand access to ensure disparities research and researchers from underrepresented minority groups are included.

Increasing diversity in research organizations and journal leadership.



Identify vision researchers from underrepresented minority groups and all researchers conducting vision research involving underrepresented minority populations to serve in leadership positions.



Increase the diversity in the leadership of academic journal editorial teams to facilitate transparency and promote equity in peer-reviewed publications.

Diversifying the research scientist pipeline.



Have pipeline research programs to attract medical students from underrepresented minority groups to ophthalmic research.



Moving forward together.



When diversity is present—of thought, race and ethnicity, sex, gender, religion, and culture—we all benefit.