



# Addressing health equity in clinical guidelines

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# Addressing health equity in clinical guidelines

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1. **What is health equity?**
2. **Global need for clinical guidelines to consider health equity**
3. **Group discussion about methods for assessing equity during development**
4. **Equity and the NICE Equality Scheme**
5. **Closing summary**

# Addressing health equity in clinical guidelines

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## 1. What is health equity?



# What is health equity?

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- “Differences in health status or in the distribution of health determinants between different population groups”

WHO definition

<http://www.who.int/hia/about/glos/en/index1.html>

- e.g. differences in mobility between elderly and younger populations



# What is health equity?

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- “Health inequalities that are attributable to the external environment or conditions mainly outside of the control of individuals, which are unfair and avoidable, are classed as ‘health inequities’”

WHO definition

<http://www.who.int/hia/about/glos/en/index1.html>

- e.g differences in mortality rates between people from different social classes



# What is health equity?

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- **PROGRESS-Plus:**
  - Place of residence (urban/rural)
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Occupation
  - Gender
  - Religion
  - Education
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Social capital



# What is health equity?

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- **PROGRESS-Plus:**
  - Any additional factors such as
    - ★ Age
    - ★ Disability
    - ★ Sexual orientation



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Any questions?



# Addressing health equity in clinical guidelines

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## 2. A global need for clinical guidelines to consider health equity

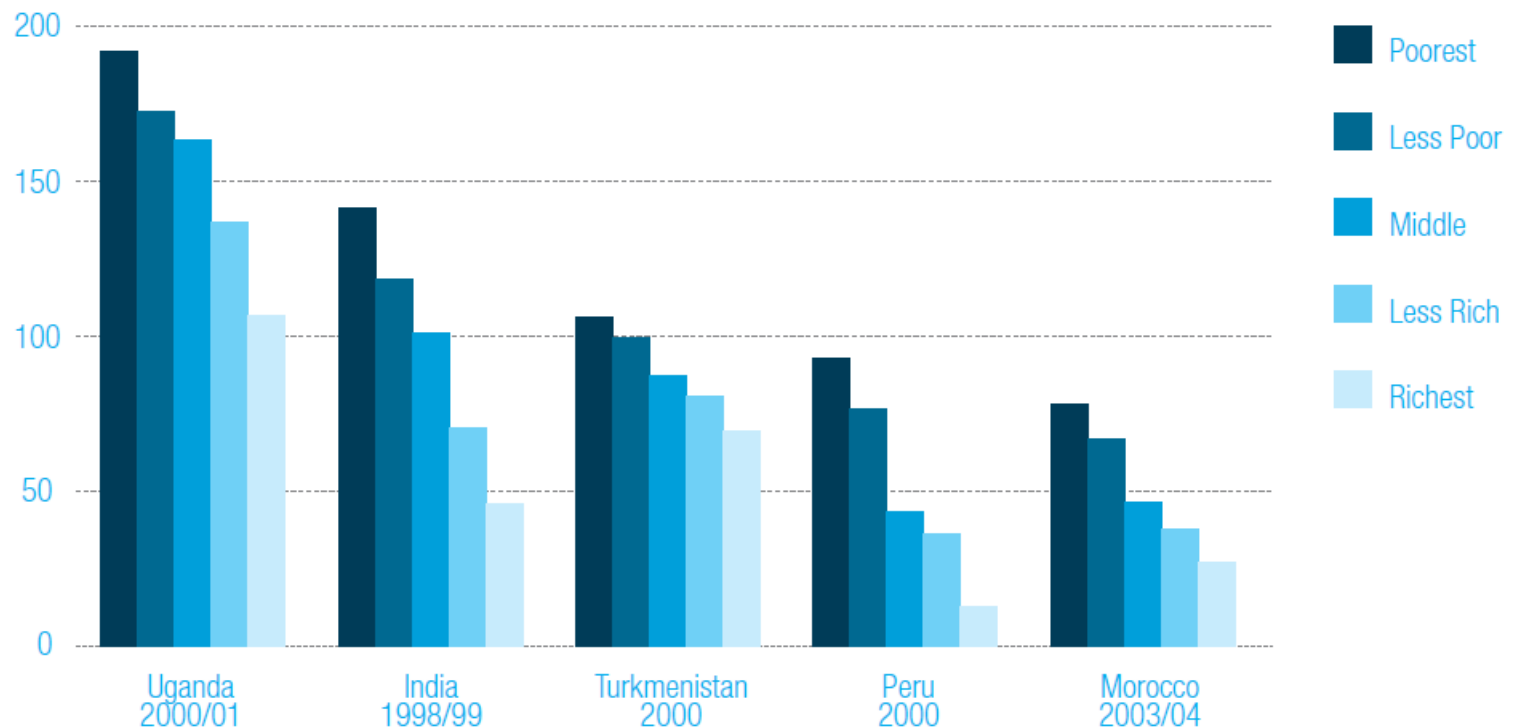


# Global health inequity

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- WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health
- Closing the gap in a generation (2008)

# Under-5 mortality rate per 1000 live births by level of household wealth

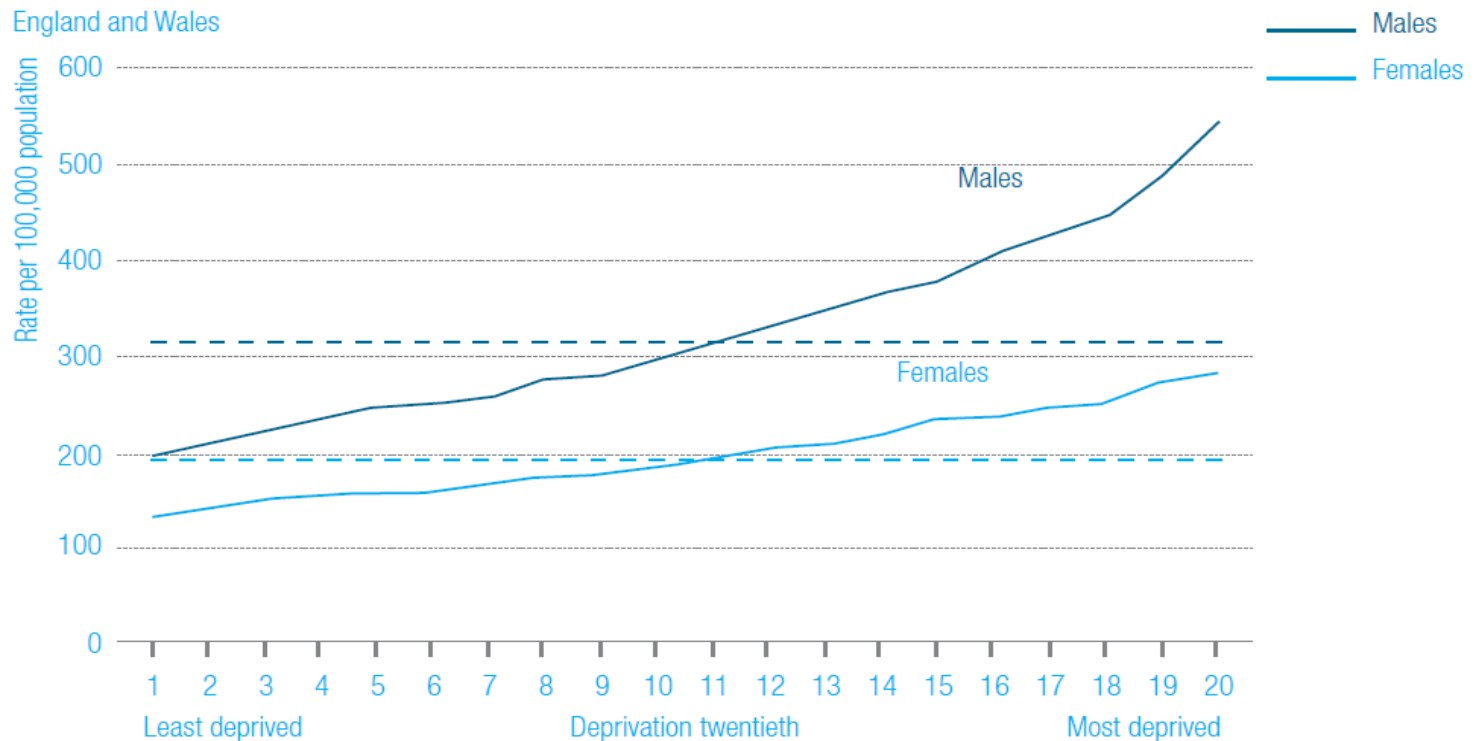


Source: Gwatkin et al. (2007), using DHS data.

Taken from 'Closing the gap in a generation' WHO 2008

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# Age-standardised all-cause death rates, ages 15-64 yrs, 1999 to 2003



Dashed lines are average mortality rates for men and women in some areas of the United Kingdom (England and Wales).

Taken from 'Closing the gap in a generation' WHO 2008

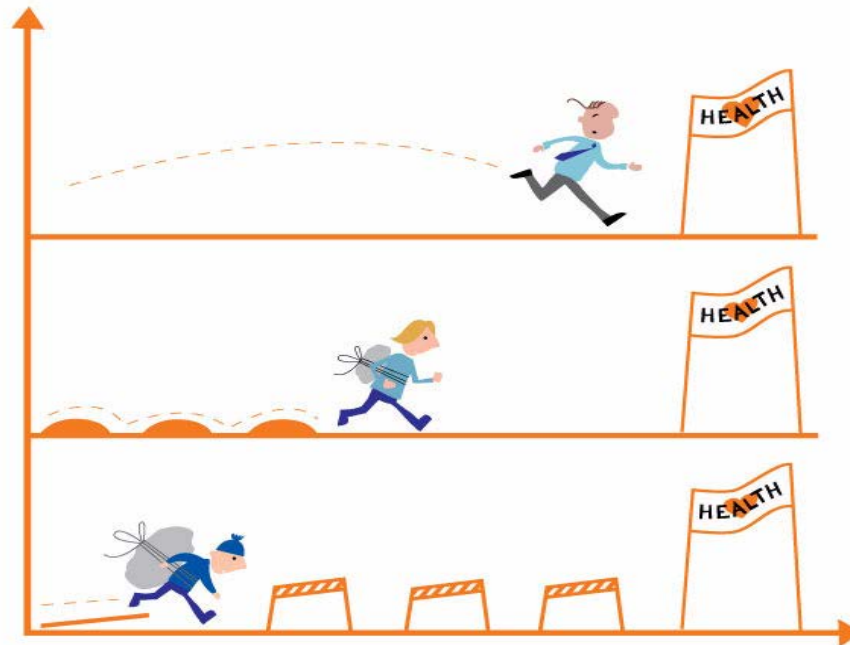


# Global health equity?

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- What contribution can clinical guidelines make to the development of health equity?
  - Consider the impact of guideline recommendations on vulnerable populations
  - Guidelines specifically for vulnerable populations

# Guidelines and equity



Taken from Norway's 'National Strategy to Reduce Social Inequalities in Health', 2007

[[http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/1975150/PDFS/STM200620070020000EN\\_PDFS.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/1975150/PDFS/STM200620070020000EN_PDFS.pdf)]

# DISCUSSION

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- In guidelines that you have followed, produced or are producing:
  - What equity issues can you identify?
  - Which disadvantaged groups or populations could be affected by your guideline recommendations?
  - What sort of barriers might those population groups experience?

Think about **PROGRESS-Plus**



# Condition-specific guidelines

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- Age

- Access to intervention not restricted by age, unless there is clear clinical evidence

- Race/ethnicity

- ‘in a variety of formats’ added to information-giving recommendations for people who do not have English as a first language





# Clinical guidelines for immigrants and refugees – a Canadian example

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- Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health
  - Health needs of newly arrived immigrants differ from those of Canadian-born population
  - Subgroups of immigrants at increased risk of disease-specific mortality

Reference: Pottie K, et al. 2011 *CMAJ* DOI:10.1503/cmaj.090313



# Pregnancy and complex social factors – a UK example

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- Pregnant women with additional needs:
  - Women who misuse substances
  - Women who are recent migrants, asylum seekers or refugees, difficulty reading/speaking English
  - Young women aged under 20
  - Women who experience domestic abuse

# DISCUSSION

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- In guidelines that you have followed, produced or are producing:
  - What equity issues can you identify?
  - Which disadvantaged groups or populations could be affected by your guideline recommendations?
  - What sort of barriers might those population groups experience?
- Think about PROGRESS-Plus

# Group work feedback

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Ideas from you!



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## 3. Methods for assessing equity issues during guideline development

**DISCUSSION!**



# Equity checklist for systematic review authors

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- Designed for use with systematic reviews with an equity focus
  - Could be adapted for reviews that do not focus on equity
- Outlines what to do during different stages of the systematic review
- PRISMA E 2012



# 'Equity lens' for guidelines

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- Assesses how successful a guideline has been in addressing equity issues
- Designed for guidelines with a public health focus
- Helpful when adapting guidelines



# When should we address equity?

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- Topic selection
- Development
  - systematic reviewing
  - writing recommendations
  - guideline adaptation
- Implementation





# DISCUSSION

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- How can guideline developers ensure that equity issues are considered throughout guideline development?
  - Use either the Equity Checklist or Equity Lens for ideas
  - Think about your own experiences and processes

Guideline stages: topic selection, reviewing evidence or adaptation, writing recommendations, implementation



# Group work feedback

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Ideas from you!

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## 4. The NICE Equality Scheme



# UK: NICE's 8 equality strands

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- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic status



# Principles for development of NICE guidance, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2008)

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## ■ Principle 7

- NICE can recommend that use of an intervention is restricted to a particular group of people within the population (e.g. People under or over a certain age) but only in certain circumstances. There must be clear evidence about the increased effectiveness of the intervention in this subgroup, or other reasons relating to fairness for society as a whole, or a legal requirement to act in this way



# Principles for development of NICE guidance, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2008)

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## ■ Principle 8

- When choosing guidance topics, developing guidance and supporting those who put its guidance into practice, the Institute should actively consider reducing health inequalities, including those associated with sex, age, race, disability and socioeconomic status



# Processes during development

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- Scoping stage
  - Have relevant equality issues been identified during scoping?
  - If there are exclusions listed in the scope (populations, treatments or settings) are these justified?
  - Have relevant bodies and stakeholders been consulted?



# Good practice points

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- Identify subgroups
- Encourage discussion
- Take a systematic approach
- Document background thinking, decisions and rationale





# Processes during development

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- Evidence assessment
  - Review question(s) reflect the conditions and aspects of care that you are interested in?
  - Was the search comprehensive?
  - Were review criteria inclusive?
  - What is the state of the evidence base?



# Processes during development

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- Stakeholder consultation
  - Revision following comments from stakeholders



# Processes during development

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## ■ Recommendations

- Have equality areas identified in scope been addressed?
- Do any recommendations make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for specific groups to access a test or intervention?
- Do the recommendations promote equality?



# Useful resources

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- NICE
  - <http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutnice/howwework/niceequalityscheme.jsp>
- Campbell & Cochrane Equity Methods Group
  - <http://equity.cochrane.org/>



# Other helpful resources

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- National Health & Medical Research Council, Australia
  - [www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/cp89](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/cp89)
  - Using socioeconomic evidence in clinical practice guidelines (2002)



# Other helpful resources

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- Centre for Health Economics,  
University of York
  - [www.york.ac.uk/che](http://www.york.ac.uk/che)
  - An equity checklist: a framework for HTAs (CHE Research Paper 62, 2011 )
  - NICE's Social Value Judgements about Equity in Health and Health Care (CHE Research Paper 70, 2011)

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THANK YOU!