Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care

Organization: Institute of Medicine (IOM)

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This landmark report from the Institute of Medicine found that a consistent body of research demonstrates significant variation in the rates of medical procedures by race, even when insurance status, income, age, and severity of conditions are comparable. This research indicates that U.S. racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to receive even routine medical procedures and experience a lower quality of health services. The committee's recommendations for reducing racial and ethnic disparities in health care include increasing awareness about disparities among the general public, health care providers, insurance companies, and policy-makers. Consistency and equity of care also should be promoted through the use of "evidence-based" guidelines to help providers and health plans make decisions about which procedures to order or pay for based on the best available science. More minority health care providers are needed, especially since they are more likely to serve in minority and medically underserved communities, the report says and more interpreters should be available in clinics and hospitals to overcome language barriers that may affect the quality of care.

- **Topic Areas:** [Cultural Competence 101](http://www.diversityrx.org/cultural-competence)
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