

Developing and implementing more inclusive demographic survey questions

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OBJECTIVES: Vulnerable populations are more likely to incur negative health outcomes and this should be considered in pharmacy practice research. To ensure that survey demographics were collected in a consistent manner that was inclusive of vulnerable populations, Ontario Pharmacist Research Collaboration (OPEN)'s Gender and Vulnerable Populations (GVP) team developed best practice survey questions that were provided to researchers via several venues.

METHODS: The GVP team (whose expertise includes pharmacy, demography, sociology and community psychology) identified demographic areas that represented vulnerable populations. Team members proposed best practice questions within their area of expertise. The team then provided a summary of questions and rationale. OPEN researchers provided input regarding preferred mechanisms for dissemination and educational tools were developed based on this feedback.

RESULTS: The GVP team identified best practice questions in the areas of sex/gender, sexual orientation, age, geographic location, race and ethnicity, Aboriginal identity and socioeconomic factors including education and income. Dissemination included 1) sending the recommended questions to researchers via email, 2) posting an online learning module that included a) suggested survey questions, b) a background document including literature and other potential questions and c) an asynchronous presentation on sex/gender and intersectionality, an area identified as less familiar to OPEN researchers and 3) offering to work with any research teams during survey development and analysis.

CONCLUSIONS: To ensure that vulnerable populations were considered in survey research design, OPEN, a large multi-institutional pharmacy practice research network, developed recommended survey questions and an educational process to inform OPEN researchers and their research.