

## Leveraging Implementation Science for Cardiovascular Health Equity: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association

The following is a synopsis of “Leveraging Implementation Science for Cardiovascular Health Equity: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association” published in November 2022 in *Circulation*.

### What is already known on this topic?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in the United States, but huge disparities in CVD outcomes have persisted and widened among racial and ethnic groups and historically marginalized populations.<sup>1</sup> To reduce CVD disparities, a focused effort to better adapt evidence-based interventions for minority populations is required. Implementation science is the study of methods to promote the adoption and integration of evidence-based practices (EBPs), interventions, and policies into routine health care and public health settings to improve population health.<sup>2</sup>

### What is added by this article?

The article acknowledges that little guidance exists on how to best leverage implementation science to promote CVD health equity. To address this gap, the American Heart Association commissioned a scientific statement to define implementation science with a CVD health equity lens and evaluate implementation research targeting CVD inequities. A scoping review was conducted to assess the available research literature on implementation science.

In this article, four major implementation science steps and key equity considerations are identified and a checklist is provided for researchers to use. These steps include:



1. Selecting and adapting EBPs shown to reduce disparities or improve CVD outcomes in historically marginalized populations
2. Identifying barriers and facilitators to implementing EBPs for CVD equity
3. Selecting, using, and adapting implementation strategies
4. Evaluating implementation success

The article argues that implementation science can play a critical role in addressing cardiovascular health disparities by helping to identify and overcome the barriers to implementing evidence-based interventions in underserved communities. By leveraging the insights and tools of implementation science, researchers can begin to identify and overcome the barriers that prevent underserved communities from accessing evidence-based interventions that can improve their cardiovascular health.



## What are the implications of these findings?

The statement argues that implementation science has the potential to significantly improve cardiovascular health equity in the United States by promoting the effective implementation of evidence-based interventions in underserved communities. The article provides a roadmap for how implementation science can be used to promote cardiovascular health equity in the United States. However, achieving CVD health equity will require an understanding of the limitations of implementation science. There are times when theoretical frameworks may be too structured and resource-intensive, inadequately focused on equity, not validated, or ill-fitted to address the needs of historically marginalized communities. The authors call for continued research and investment in implementation science to help address the complex social and environmental factors contributing to cardiovascular health disparities. The article provides important guidance on how implementation science can be leveraged to promote cardiovascular health equity and highlights the need for continued research and investment in this area. By better understanding the barriers to implementing

evidence-based interventions in underserved communities, researchers can begin to close the gap in cardiovascular health outcomes and promote health equity for all.

## Resources

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[Community-Clinical Linkages: Implementing an Operational Structure with a Health Equity Lens](#)

**Harvard Catalyst**  
[Community Engagement Program | Implementation Science](#)

**Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research**  
[CFIR | Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research](#)



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## References

1. Mensah GA, Cooper RS, Siega-Riz AM, et al. Reducing Cardiovascular Disparities Through Community-Engaged Implementation Research: A National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Workshop Report. *Circ Res*. 2018;122(2):213-230. doi:10.1161/CIRCRESAHA.117.312243
2. National Cancer Institute (2022). About Implementation Science | Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (DCCPS). Available at About Implementation Science | Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (DCCPS) (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

## Citation

Moise N, Cené CW, Tabak RG, Young DR, Mills KT, Essien UR, Anderson CAM, Lopez-Jimenez F; American Heart Association Council on Epidemiology and Prevention; Council on Hypertension; and Stroke Council. Leveraging Implementation Science for Cardiovascular Health Equity: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2022 Nov 8;146(19):e260-e278. doi: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000001096. Epub 2022 Oct 10. PMID: 36214131.



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