

Research proposal:
Finding Inequity in Massachusetts
Disabilities community eligible for
Vocational Rehabilitation

Ronaldo Fujii, MD PhD
Statewide Rehabilitation Council

Why do formal research?

Reproducibility and Trust:

- Describing the methods of our research will allow others to verify our findings, trust our results and follow our recommendations
- Results and methods can be shared with other states and acquire further MRC funding if necessary
- Methods can be replicated and information needs can be addressed in the future by the census bureau offices
- Ultimately BIPOC communities will be accurately depicted and better served

Applied Research

Problem:

Unknown levels of inequity in VR services for BIPOC disability communities leading to lack of focus on impact to those most needing VR and lack of direction in how to best reach and serve them

Research Questions:

- 1) Who are all disabilities sub-populations eligible for VR services in MA?
- 2) Which disability sub-populations are most impacted by inequity and are underserved by VR?
- 3) Which are the places VR services should be advertised or consumers be reached/followed-up proactively?

Addressing the research questions 1 of 2:

1) Who are all disabilities sub-populations eligible for VR services in MA?

Data can be retrieved from the census bureau on race, gender, family income and other variables that might help determining groups of interest and future cross-referencing with MRC data may allow us to identify blind spots in our services

2) Which disability sub-populations are most impacted by inequity and are underserved by VR?

Indicators can be built to estimate the impact of inequity (e.g.: level of family income of certain groups, percentage of individuals with easy access to public transportation, etc.)

Addressing the research questions 2 of 2:

3) Which are the places VR services should be advertised or consumers be reached/followed-up proactively?

Census data includes ZIP code, which will allow us to plot the different disability groups in a map, which will help us directing MRC efforts in a smart manner

Current Social Security Administration does not have information on BIPOC and other underserved communities

Steps to make it happen:

1) Systematic literature review:

A lot was already produced and we need to understand about publications for BIPOC individuals

2) Scientific community outreach:

Reach paper authors and institutions (census bureau) for data sharing and methodology sharing

3) Extract data from the Census Bureau to respond relevant questions not addressed by the scientific literature review

4) Analyze the data with known methods and build new evaluations if existing methods are not informative

5) Publish and share information / Build recommendations to MRC VR services based on the analysis results

Timeline and resources needed

STEP	TIMEFRAME
Literature review	January to March
Literature review publication	April to mid June
Scientific community contacting	February to May
Census bureau data extraction	March to May
Analysis of the data	June to August
Analysis publication	July to October
Recommendations to MRC	July to September

Observation: Statistical analysis plan and analysis would benefit from consulting services/ vendor: estimated cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000