

## How structural racism undermines independent science research and hurts racial and ethnic minorities

It is critical to acknowledge the societal structures – the groundwater, as it is called in “[The Groundwater Approach: Building a Practical Understanding of Structural Racism](#)” from The Racial Equity Institute – that have led to disproportionate rates of disease among people from various racial and ethnic groups. Previous research attributes many disparities to issues related to individual factors or local systems not the underlying societal factors, or groundwater.

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A key first principle urges that measuring race and ethnicity be done correctly – enabling people to self-report race and ethnicity.

Race categorization after data collection also matters, therefore, describing subjects as white versus non-white inherently reinforces the belief that white race is the standard by which other populations should be measured. In addition, they strongly recommend the inclusion of researchers of diverse backgrounds as a principle to ensure broad perspectives.

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“Race is associated with so much more than genetics and ancestry, including social determinants of health (e.g., income, education, housing) that also are inextricably linked to systemic and structural racism,” said co-author Erica S. Spatz, M.D., M.H.S... “We need our work in disparities research to reflect these complexities if we are to move from merely describing differences to making meaningful change.”

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