# The Role Of Healthcare Team In Promoting Health Equity: A Systematic Review

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#### Abstract

**Background:** Health equity remains a critical global challenge, with disparities in access to healthcare and health outcomes persisting across regions and populations. Understanding the role of healthcare teams in promoting health equity is essential for designing effective interventions and policy frameworks to address these disparities. **Aims:** This systematic review examines health equity policies, strategies, and interventions, focusing on the role of the healthcare team in promoting health equity.

**Method:** The review, which included eleven studies published between 2018 and 2022, aimed to classify necessary research

from databases like PsycINFO, MEDLINE, and Web of Science. Key themes included incorporating a health equity lens in public policies, strategies for achieving health equity within healthcare systems, and identifying priority areas for health research.

**Results:** Synthesis of findings revealed several key themes, including the incorporation of health equity into public policies, strategies for achieving health equity within healthcare systems, research priorities for addressing health disparities, and interventions targeting specific health domains such as oral health in children and the integration of social determinants of health into medical education curricula.

**Conclusion:** The findings underscore the importance of policy integration, strategic interventions, and research prioritization in promoting health equity within healthcare systems. Recommendations include prioritizing health equity in policymaking, building structural competency within healthcare teams, and addressing social determinants of health to foster equitable healthcare practices both locally in Saudi Arabia and internationally. However, limitations include the reliance on existing literature and potential lack of generalizability across diverse contexts.

**Keywords:** Healthcare Team, Promoting Health Equity, Systematic Review

#### Introduction

A healthcare team is a group of professionals from various disciplines working together to provide comprehensive care to patients. Key members include physicians, nurses, pharmacists, allied health professionals, medical assistants, administrative staff, care coordinators, and patient advocates. Physicians diagnose illnesses, develop treatment plans, prescribe medications, and oversee patient care (Teisberg et al., 2020; Buljac-Samardzic et al., 2020; Rosen et al., 2018). Nurses provide direct care, administer medications, monitor conditions, and coordinate care across settings. Pharmacists are experts in medication and work closely with physicians to ensure safe and effective medication. Allied health professionals provide specialized services to help patients

rehabilitate, manage chronic conditions, and improve their quality of life. Medical assistants and nursing assistants assist in providing direct patient care (Abdel-Basset et al., 2021; Karam et al., 2018; Lacerenza et al., 2018). Administrative staff manages administrative aspects of healthcare delivery. Care coordinators and case managers coordinate care across providers and settings (Teixeira et al., 2020; Aufegger et al., 2019).

Health equity is a concept that aims to address the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to lead a healthy life. Health disparities refer to differences in health outcomes or access to healthcare services between different population groups, influenced by factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age, disability status, sexual orientation, and geographic location (Braveman et al., 2018; Artig & Hinton, 2019) Social determinants of health include income, wealth distribution, education, employment opportunities, housing stability, access to nutritious food, environmental quality, social support networks, and access to healthcare services (Dover & Belon, 2019; Alcaraz et al., 2020; Jilani et al., 2021). Barriers to health equity can be systemic, institutional, or individual. Promoting health equity involves implementing strategies and interventions to reduce health disparities, such as affordable housing initiatives, healthcare access, culturally competent care, and community engagement. Monitoring and evaluating progress towards health equity is essential to identify areas of improvement and ensure the effectiveness of interventions (Woodward et al., 2021; Patel et al., 2020).

The healthcare team is a vital force in addressing health equity, involving a diverse group of professionals from various fields. They work together to address the complex nature of health disparities, focusing on culturally competent care, community engagement, and education. By fostering trust and understanding among patients, healthcare providers can dismantle systemic inequities and promote equitable access to healthcare services. The healthcare team also extends its reach beyond the clinic, recognizing that health outcomes are influenced by social,

economic, and environmental factors. They form partnerships with local organizations and advocacy groups to address the unique challenges faced by underserved communities. They advocate for affordable housing, healthy food options, and educational initiatives to drive meaningful change at the grassroots level (McGregor et al., 2019; Artiga & Hinton, 2019). Education is another crucial tool in the healthcare team's arsenal, empowering patients with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions about their health. They provide culturally tailored health education programs, language interpretation services, and health literacy initiatives to ensure no one is left behind. Datadriven approaches are used to monitor progress, track outcomes, and identify areas for improvement in the journey towards health equity. The team refines its strategies, adapting to the evolving needs of diverse populations and striving towards health equity (Alcaraz et al., 2020; Shelton et al., 2020; Curtis et al., 2019). In conclusion, the healthcare team represents a collective commitment to justice, compassion, and solidarity, advocating for a future where every individual has the opportunity to attain their highest level of health.

# **Research Question**

1. What is the role of healthcare team in promoting health equity?

# Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to examine the role of healthcare team in promoting health equity.

## Methods

# **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

The systematic review "The Role of Healthcare Team in Promoting Health Equity: A Systematic Review" aims to focus on the role of healthcare teams in promoting health equity. The review includes studies published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, or reports, and written in English. Excluding studies that do not meet these criteria or are duplicate publications, the review maintains focus and relevance to the research question.

The criteria include research design; focus on healthcare teams, health equity, population, interventions/strategies, outcome measures, and publication date. Exclusion criteria include non-peer-reviewed literature, non-English language, irrelevant topics, non-human studies, unclear methodology, duplicate publications, and not accessible full-text articles. Adjustments to these criteria may be made based on the review's specific goals and scope.

# **Search Strategy**

A comprehensive search strategy was developed to identify relevant studies. Databases such as PubMed, PsycINFO and Web of Science will be searched using a combination of keywords related to "Healthcare Team," "Promoting Health Equity," " and "The Role of Healthcare Team in Promoting Health Equity". The search strategy was tailored to each database's syntax and terminology.

**Table 1** Syntax Search

Syntax	"Healthcare Team," "Promoting Health Equity,"	
1	"KSA"	
Syntax	"The Role of Healthcare Team in Promoting Health	
2	Equity in KSA"	

Table 2 Statistics from the Data Base

No	Database	Syntax	Year	No of Researches
1	Web of Science	Syntax 1 Syntax 2	2018- 2022	109 13
2	MEDLINE	Syntax 1 Syntax 2	2018- 2022	85 17
3	PsycINFO	Syntax 1 Syntax 2	2018- 2022	153 15

To discover relevant research publications, three prominent databases were used: Scopus, PubMed, and Web of Science—the chosen search to assure validity and applicability focused on papers issued during 2018 and 2022. According to the statistics, PsycINFO produced the most significant research articles, totalling 168, while Web of Science contributed 122 and MEDLINE 102. These findings show the thoroughness of the scientific search and lay a solid foundation for the next steps of the systemic review.

researches

200
100
0
researches

Figure 1 Research Data base

# **Study Selection**

The systematic review "The Role of Healthcare Team in Promoting Health Equity: A Systematic Review" uses a methodical approach to identify and analyze relevant literature. It begins with a comprehensive search of databases, screening titles and abstracts for potential studies meeting inclusion and exclusion criteria. Full-text articles are then reviewed to determine eligibility. Data extraction is performed systematically, and quality assessment is conducted to evaluate the methodological rigor of selected articles. Findings are synthesized to identify common themes and trends in the role of healthcare teams in promoting health equity.

**Table 3** Selected Studies for SR (Systematic Review)

No Author		Research
	Eklund Karlsson, L., et al.	Health equity lens embedded in the public health policies of Saudi Arabia: A
1	(2020)	qualitative document analysis

No	Author	Research			
2	Marmot, M., et al. (2021)	Build back fairer: achieving health equity in the Eastern Mediterranean region of WHO			
3	Alotaibi, A., et al. (2022)	Health research priority agenda for Ministry Of Health, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 2020 to 2025			
4	Ramos-Gomez, F., et al. (2020)	Understanding oral health disparities in children as a global public health issue: how dental health professionals can make a difference			
5	Mangold, K. A., et al. (2019)	Expert consensus on inclusion of the social determinants of health in undergraduate medical education curricula			
6	Holzmeyer, C. (2021)	Beyond 'AI for Social Good' (AI4SG): social transformations—not tech-fixes—for health equity			
7	Nezamoleslami, D., et al. (2022)	Barriers of health equity in the Iranian health system from the medical ethics viewpoint			
8	McNulty, M., et al. (2019)	Implementation research methodologies for achieving scientific equity and health equity			
9	Wakefield, M., et al. (2021)	The future of nursing 2020-2030: Charting a path to achieve health equity			
10	Alkhamis, A., & Miraj, S. A. (2021)	Access to health care in Saudi Arabia: development in the context of vision 2030			
11	Davis, S., & O'Brien, A. M. (2020)	Let's talk about racism: Strategies for building structural competency in nursing			

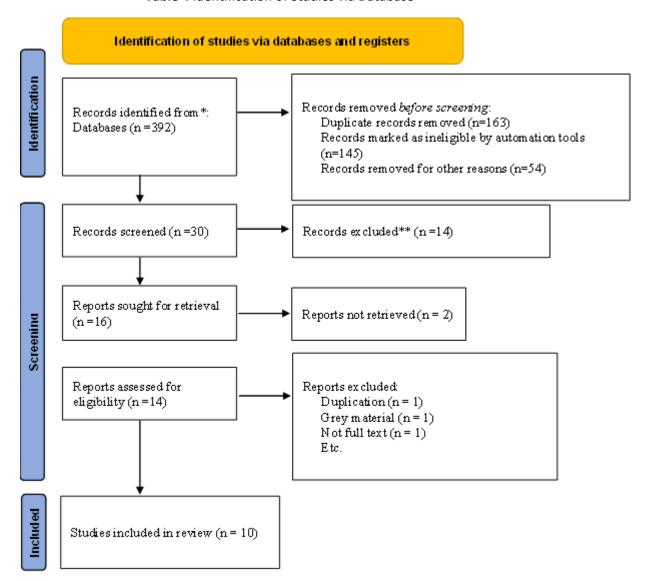
# **PRISMA Flowchart**

The study selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1). It provides a visual representation of the number of records at each stage of the selection process, from initial database search to final inclusion in the systematic review.

# Identification of studies via databases and registers

Boolean operators are essential in identifying relevant literature in databases. Researchers use a systematic search strategy, including keywords, terms, and Boolean operators, to gather relevant studies. This comprehensive approach ensures a comprehensive retrieval of relevant literature, laying the foundation for subsequent stages of study selection and data extraction in the systematic review process.

Table 4 Identification of Studies via Database



# **Data Extraction**

Data extraction is a crucial process in systematic review methodology. It starts with creating a standardized form to capture study details, refines it with pilot studies, and then involves researchers extracting data on study characteristics, participant demographics, interventions, outcomes, and key findings. Quality assessment is conducted, and data accuracy and consistency are verified. Synthesized data informs the review's findings, ensuring reliability and validity of the evidence.

**Table 5** Research Matrix

No	Author and Year	Aim of Study	Methodology	Sample	Setting	Result
1	Eklund Karlsson et al. (2020)	To analyze the incorporation of a health equity lens into public health policies in Saudi Arabia		Not specified	Saudi Arabia	Identified the presence of a health equity lens in public health policies of Saudi Arabia
2	Marmot et al. (2021)	To propose strategies for achieving health equity in the Eastern Mediterranean region	Literature review	Not applicable	Eastern Mediterranean region	Proposed strategies for achieving health equity in the region
3	Alotaibi et al. (2022)	To establish health research priorities for the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia from 2020 to 2025	Not specified	Not specified	Saudi Arabia	Established health research priority agenda for the Ministry of Health from 2020 to 2025
4	Ramos-Gomez et al. (2020)	To explore oral health disparities in children globally and suggest interventions	Literature review	Not applicable	Global	Identified oral health disparities in children globally and suggested interventions
5	Mangold et al. (2019)	To achieve consensus on integrating social determinants of health into undergraduate medical education curricula	Expert consensus	Not specified	Not specified	Achieved consensus on inclusion of social determinants of health in undergraduate medical education
6	Holzmeyer (2021)	To critique the concept of "AI for Social Good" and advocate for social transformations for health equity	Literature review	Not applicable	Not specified	Critiqued the concept of "Al for Social Good" and advocated for social transformations for health equity
7	Nezamoleslami et al. (2022)	To identify barriers to health equity in the Iranian health system from a medical ethics perspective	Qualitative analysis of medical ethics viewpoint	Not specified	Iran	Identified barriers to health equity in the Iranian health system from a medical ethics perspective
8	McNulty et al. (2019)	To outline implementation research methodologies for achieving scientific and health equity	Literature review	Not applicable	Not specified	Outlined implementation research methodologies for achieving scientific and health equity
9	Wakefield et al. (2021)	To chart a path for achieving health equity in nursing from 2020 to 2030	Narrative research	Not specified	Not specified	Charted a path for achieving health equity in nursing from 2020 to 2030
10	Alkhamis & Miraj (2021)	To examine access to healthcare in Saudi Arabia in the context of Vision 2030	Literature review	Not applicable	Saudi Arabia	Examined access to healthcare in Saudi Arabia in the context of Vision 2030
11	Davis & O'Brien (2020)	To propose strategies for building structural competency in nursing, particularly addressing racism	Literature review	Not applicable	Not specified	Proposed strategies for building structural competency in nursing, particularly addressing racism

# **Quality Assessment**

Quality assessment is a crucial step in systematic reviews, ensuring the reliability and validity of studies. Researchers use established criteria to evaluate aspects like study design, participant selection, blinding, data collection methods, and statistical analysis. Inter-

rater reliability checks and sensitivity analyses are conducted to maintain consistency. Transparent reporting enhances credibility and reproducibility. This process helps researchers interpret findings, acknowledging strengths and limitations, and strengthens the evidence base for decision-making in practice, policy, and research.

Table 6Assessment of the literature quality matrix

Sr		Are the selection of studies described	Is the literature covered all	Does the method section	Were findings clearly	Quality
#	Author	appropriately?	relevant studies?	describe?	described?	rating
	Eklund Karlsson et					
1	al. (2020)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Moderate
	Marmot et al.					
2	(2021)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
3	Alotaibi et al. (2022)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Moderate
	Ramos-Gomez et					
4	al. (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
	Mangold et al.					
5	(2019)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
6	Holzmeyer (2021)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
	Nezamoleslami et				.,	
7	al. (2022)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Moderate
8	McNulty et al. (2019)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
	Wakefield et al.					
9	(2021)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
	Alkhamis & Miraj					
10	(2021)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
	Davis & O'Brien					
11	(2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High

The systematic review of studies provided clear descriptions, methods, selection processes, literature coverage, and clear conclusions, resulting in a "Good" rating for their quality.

# **Data Synthesis**

Data synthesis in systematic reviews involves collecting, organizing, and analyzing findings from individual studies to draw comprehensive conclusions. Researchers meticulously extract relevant data, organize it for analysis, and construct tabular summaries or narrative syntheses. Meta-analysis techniques may be employed to combine results across studies, while narrative synthesis explores patterns, themes, and discrepancies. This process provides valuable insights into the current state of knowledge on a topic, guiding future research, policy, and practice decisions.

#### **Results**

# **Study Selection**

A systematic search of electronic databases identified 392 records. After removing duplicates, 11 unique records were assessed for eligibility based on titles and abstracts.

# **Title and Abstract Screening**

During the initial screening, reviewer assessed the titles and abstracts of the identified records. Following this process, 11 studies were selected for full-text assessment. Disagreements between the reviewers were resolved through discussion and consensus.

# **Full-Text Assessment**

The full texts of the 11 selected studies were obtained and independently reviewed against the inclusion and exclusion criteria by two reviewers. Following the full-text assessment, 11 studies met the criteria and were included in the systematic review.

# **Synthesized Findings**

# Table 7

# Sr # Theme Subtheme

Sr	# Theme	Subtheme
2	Health Equity Policies and Strategie	s Strategies for Achieving Health Equity in Healthcare Systems
3	Health Equity Policies and Strategie	s Health Research Priority Agenda for Addressing Health Disparities
4	Oral Health Disparities	Global Oral Health Disparities in Children
5	Integration of Social Determinants	Inclusion of Social Determinants of Health in Medical Education Curricula

# Discussion

The systematic review aimed to explore the role of healthcare teams in promoting health equity by synthesizing findings from 11 relevant studies. Through this synthesis, several significant insights emerged, contributing to our understanding of health equity promotion within healthcare systems and broader societal contexts.

The incorporation of a health equity lens into public policies, particularly in regions such as Saudi Arabia, emerges as a significant theme (Eklund Karlsson et al., 2020; Alkhamis & Miraj, 2021). These studies underscore the importance of policy frameworks that prioritize equity, emphasizing the need for systemic changes to address health disparities effectively.

Moreover, strategic approaches for achieving health equity within healthcare systems are highlighted (Marmot et al., 2021; Davis & O'Brien, 2020). Structural competency building, antiracism initiatives, and advocacy for broader social transformations are proposed as essential strategies. This indicates that fostering health equity necessitates not only institutional reforms but also cultural shifts within healthcare practices.

Furthermore, the identification of health research priority agendas, particularly in regions like Saudi Arabia, is crucial for guiding evidence-based interventions aimed at addressing health disparities (Alotaibi et al., 2022). This underscores the importance of targeted research efforts in informing policy and practice to promote equitable healthcare delivery.

Global disparities in oral health among children are identified, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address specific health domains (Ramos-Gomez et al., 2020).

Additionally, achieving consensus on integrating social determinants of health into medical education curricula signifies an essential step in fostering awareness among future healthcare professionals (Mangold et al., 2019).

The critique of "AI for Social Good" and the advocacy for broader social transformations to achieve health equity underscore the importance of critically examining technological solutions within the context of social justice (Holzmeyer, 2021). This suggests that while technological innovations hold potential, they must be accompanied by efforts to address underlying social determinants of health.

Moreover, the identification of barriers to health equity within healthcare systems from a medical ethics perspective sheds light on ethical considerations that impact equitable healthcare delivery (Nezamoleslami et al., 2022). This highlights the need for ethical frameworks that prioritize fairness and justice in healthcare decision-making.

# **Contribution to Saudi and International Context:**

This study provides insights into how Saudi Arabia is addressing health equity within its public policies and research priorities, contributing to the local healthcare context. Additionally, it offers valuable strategies applicable globally to tackle health disparities, making it relevant beyond Saudi borders.

#### **Implications:**

The findings underscore the importance of prioritizing health equity in policy-making and research agendas. They highlight the need for systemic changes and cultural shifts within healthcare systems to promote equitable healthcare delivery.

# **Suggestions:**

Based on the synthesis of findings, it is suggested that policymakers prioritize the integration of health equity principles into public policies and allocate resources for targeted interventions. Additionally, healthcare systems should focus on

building structural competency and addressing social determinants of health to foster equitable healthcare practices.

#### Limitations:

One limitation of this study is the reliance on existing literature, which may not fully capture the current state of healthcare systems or policy implementations. Additionally, the generalizability of findings may be limited due to the diverse contexts in which the included studies were conducted.

#### Conclusion

The synthesis of findings from these studies provides nuanced insights into the multifaceted nature of health equity promotion. It underscores the importance of policy integration, strategic interventions, research prioritization, education, ethical considerations, and broader societal transformations in achieving equitable healthcare systems.

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