



## ***SESSION 5: Structural Inequalities in ASD Diagnosis and Services at the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender***

**Dr. Jennifer Singh**

**Georgia Institute of Technology**

17 August 2017 // 1:00 pm EDT

### **Course Materials**

The purpose of these materials is to help provide an introduction to this Summer Institute session, in which Dr. Singh will provide a sociological perspective of autism research and the structural inequalities that are present in research, as well as the community. The materials were designed to prepare trainees who are unfamiliar with sociological approaches to autism research with the general background to get the most educational benefit from Dr. Singh's presentation. Toward this objective, Dr. Singh has

prepared the following: (1) learning objectives to guide today's presentation (2) some key terms and concepts to become familiar with ethical issues and participatory research; (3) some recommended reading. These materials could be considered "prerequisites" in preparing for Dr. Singh's presentation.

In collaboration with Dr. Singh, these materials were developed by Sowmyashree mayur kaku, PhD (Clinical Neurosciences and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Bangalore, Karnataka, India).

Register for this course and other sessions in this series at [autism-insar.org](http://autism-insar.org).

## **Learning Objectives**

The Summer Institute for Autism Research was established in direct response to requests from early career researchers (graduate students, postdocs, etc.), who asked INSAR for greater training opportunities in multidisciplinary topics. In designing the Summer Institute, the priorities were: (1) to provide a multidisciplinary training platform for young scientists from various backgrounds; (2) allow international participation; and (3) make it freely available. Thus, the second Summer Institute covers broad topics (which are geared to researchers outside the respective topic areas), is offered over a free web platform, and allows researchers from around the world to connect with the presenter. The overarching goal of the Summer Institute is to expose junior scientists to topics they are not currently engaged in, with the hope that basic scientists and clinical scientists could learn from each other to ultimately advance the understanding of autism.

By participating in this webinar, participants will:

1. Learn about the range of quantitative and qualitative autism disparities research
2. Identify autism disparities that exist within multiple axis of inequality, including gender, race, ethnicity and social class
3. Understand how structural and institutional inequalities shape autism disparities
4. Become familiar with the gendered politics of Medicaid

## Terminology

**Socioeconomic Status (SES) or social class:** An index of social status that considers a person's occupation, education, and income as measures of social status.

**Race:** A classification of humans into groups based on distinguishable physical characteristics that may form the basis for significant social identities.

**Ethnicity:** A group that shares a common cultural tradition and sense of identity.

**Gender:** The traits and behaviors that are socially designated as "masculine" or "feminine" in a particular society.

**Disparity:** The existence of unequal opportunities or rewards for people based on different social factors such as race or ethnicity, sex, sexual identity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.

**Intersectionality:** A theoretical framework first advanced by black feminist scholars. It conceptualizes various dimensions of inequality such as race, class, sexuality, and gender as intersecting relations of power, a basis for identity and group status, and the dimensions of hierarchical difference. Intersectionality interrogates how race, class, gender, and other social locations operate simultaneously in social life rather than working as a single category. Importantly, it acknowledges how power is organized, distributed, maintained, and challenged based on these intersecting social categories.

**Flexible resources:** These are resources (such as money, knowledge, prestige, power, and beneficial social conditions) that protect people from disease and negative health outcomes.

**Structural inequality:** Macro-level inequalities that consists of costumes, practices, or laws that shape health inequalities, such as historical segregation laws, healthcare policies, and special educational laws that restrict or deny access to services.

**Institutional inequality:** Meso-level inequalities that are based on differential access to goods, services, and opportunities of society, including material conditions (e.g., quality education, sound housing or appropriate medical facilities) and the ability to access power (e.g., knowledge, resources, and representation).

**Medicaid:** Medicaid is a U.S. Federal health care program administered by the states that provides health coverage to low income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults and people with disabilities.

## Recommended Reading

Daniels, A. M., & Mandell, D. S. (2014). Explaining differences in age at autism spectrum disorder diagnosis: A critical review. *Autism, 18*(5), 583-597. doi:10.1177/1362361313480277

Fountain, C., King, M. D., & Bearman, P. S. (2011). Age of diagnosis for autism: individual and community factors across 10 birth cohorts. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 65*(6), 503-510. doi:10.1136/jech.2009.104588

Liptak, Gregory S., Lauren B. Benzoni, Daniel W. Mruzek, Karen W. Nolan, Melissa A. Thingvoll, Christine M. Wade, and G. Edgar Fryer. 2008. "Disparities in diagnosis and access to health services for children with autism: Data from the National Survey of Children's Health." *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics 29* (3):152-160. doi: 10.1097/DBP.0b013e318165c7a0.

Lopez, Kristina. 2014. Sociocultural Perspectives of Latino Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Best Practices in Mental Health, 10*(2), 15-31.

Magana, S., Parish, S. L., Rose, R. A., Timberlake, M., & Swaine, J. G. (2012). Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Quality of Health Care Among Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 50*(4), 287-299. doi:10.1352/1934-9556-50.4.287

Mandell, D. S., Wiggins, L. D., Carpenter, L. A., Daniels, J., DiGuseppi, C., Durkin, M. S., . . . Kirby, R. S. (2009). Racial/Ethnic Disparities in the Identification of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*(3), 493-498.

Shattuck, P. T., & Grosse, S. D. (2007). Issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews, 13*(2), 129-135. doi:10.1002/mrdd.20143

Watkins-Hayes, C. (2014). Intersectionality and the Sociology of HIV/AIDS: Past, Present, and Future Research Directions. *Annual Review of Sociology, Vol 40, 40*, 431-457. doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145621

Zuckerman, K. E., Mattox, K. M., Sinche, B. K., Blaschke, G. S., & Bethell, C. (2014). Racial, Ethnic, and Language Disparities in Early Childhood Developmental/Behavioral Evaluations: A Narrative Review. *Clinical Pediatrics, 53*(7), 619-631. doi:10.1177/0009922813501378