



Citizenship health inequalities across the US: State-level immigrant policies and health care access

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ERC Conference Room 115



Maria-Elena De Trinidad Young, PhD, MPH

Maria-Elena Young, PhD, is a researcher who examines the impact of immigration policies on public health. Her studies have employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand how access to health care and health status are shaped by both federal policies, such as those that increase immigration enforcement, and state policies, such as those that restrict or expand rights and protections for noncitizens. She is the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Merced and project director of the Research on Immigrant Health and State Policy (RIGHTS) Study at the Center for Health Policy Research at the University of California, Los Angeles. She completed her PhD in Community Health Sciences at UCLA and holds a Masters in Public Health in Maternal and Child Health from the University of California, Berkeley and a BA in Spanish from Swarthmore College.

In this talk, I present findings from two studies that examine how citizenship status and immigrant policies influence inequities in access to health care. Immigrants who lack citizenship are less likely to have health insurance and access to health care compared to citizens. Citizenship status is a form of inequality that is shaped by the policies that determine immigrants' rights and opportunities and the social environments in which they live. Using a novel, state-level policy data set and individual-level population survey data, I assess the extent to which the differences in insurance and access to care between noncitizens and citizens vary based states' inclusion or criminalization policies. Results suggest that there may be smaller health care inequities by citizenship in states with a greater number of policies that extend health, social welfare, educational and other rights to noncitizens and greater inequities in states that have more immigration enforcement and surveillance policies.

For more information please call 858-822-4447 or email aminvielle@ucsd.edu