

PhenX Social Determinants of Health Guidance Document

The PhenX Toolkit is an NIH funded project that compiles protocols for research (<https://www.phenxtoolkit.org/collections/view/6>). One sub-set of collections relates to the Social Determinants of Health. This collection has 3 components (a) core (b) individual determinants and (c) structural social determinants. All these measures are context specific so may not be suitable outside of the USA for where they were developed. Researchers in other countries may be able to find equivalent data or their own country specific measure that is intended to capture the same construct or latent variable. For researchers who are unfamiliar with these sorts of exposures it may be sensible to seek the support or collaboration of an academic with suitable expertise (e.g., social epidemiologist, medical sociologist, etc.).

Core section

This has 16 protocols 5 of which are classified as social determinants (i) Access to Health Services, (ii) English Proficiency, (iii) Food Insecurity, (iv) Health Literacy, (v) Occupational Prestige and the others are demographic.

Individual determinants

This section has 12 protocols some of which are also in the core. The additional topics are (i) Access to Health Technology, (ii) Discrimination, (iii) Disparate Health Care Quality, (iv) Health Numeracy, (v) Job Insecurity, (vi) Spirituality, (vii) Wealth.

Structural social determinants

The sub-section has 10 protocols that cover either environmental factors or ecological aspects of area of residence. The former may not only reflect adverse social conditions but may also be markers of neurotoxic exposures (e.g., air pollution). They are (i) Air Quality Index, (ii) Concentrated Poverty, (iii) Educational Attainment at a Community Ecological Level, (iv) Environmental Justice, (v) Food Swamp, (vi) Percent Unionized for Non-Agricultural Labor Force, (vii) Race/Ethnic Residential Segregation – American Community Survey, (viii) Race/Ethnic Residential Segregation – Separation (S) Index, Unbiased, (ix) Race/Ethnic Residential Segregation - U.S. Census, (x) Social Vulnerability.