

Evidence for Equity: Introducing Betta Health Equity

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There are moments in history that we recognize, only with hindsight, as inflection points—chapters when the arc of progress bends toward justice. We believe the launch of Betta Health Equity marks such a moment, not because we presume to hold all the answers, but because we are committed to asking the right questions, in the right ways, and alongside the right voices.

There was a time when discussions of health inequities were the footnotes in technical papers, the afterthoughts in donor proposals, and the murmurs in conference corridors. These were days when health disparities occupied the margins of global health discourse. But has the world changed much? Even when pandemics, poverty, and politics have collided too visibly to ignore.

The signs were always there. The child in a coastal community that dies of a preventable infection like malaria. The mother in a rural village turned away in labor because a clinic has no skilled staff. The adolescent refugee navigating trauma with no mental health support in the migrant camp. The Indigenous elder whose traditional knowledge is dismissed in research about their own community. The cumulative effect of these injustices is not merely data—it is the erosion of human dignity.

And yet, amidst this crisis, we sense something stirring. We see young researchers turning their lens toward social justice. We see community health workers challenging systems with lived wisdom. We see policymakers leaning in toward evidence that centers equity. We see technology wielded not just for innovation's sake but to reach those historically excluded from its promise. We see science rediscovering its soul.

It is in this spirit that Betta Health Equity takes its first breath.

The launch of Betta Health Equity marks the beginning of a new scholarly platform committed to advancing health equity through rigorous peer-reviewed research, inclusive dialogue, and global collaboration. At a time when disparities in health outcomes remain a persistent and complex challenge globally, Betta Health Equity emerges with a clear mission: to serve as an open-access, interdisciplinary journal that prioritizes research that not only describes inequities but actively informs practitioners, programs, and policies that seek to reduce them.

Our journal is more than a repository of knowledge—it is a stage for voices, a bridge across disciplines, and a space where rigor meets relevance. Betta Health Equity will accept articles that promote health equity from a broad range of fields, including infectious diseases, public health, digital health, health systems research, epidemiology, mental health, one health, and social determinants of health. We invite research that challenges disparities in healthcare access, highlights resilience, community-led innovation, and transformative solutions, and deepens our understanding of how policies shape the well-being of communities. Our scope is not confined to the biomedical sciences alone; we welcome studies from social sciences, behavioral sciences, and environmental health that intersect with health equity. Our scope reflects the often complex, messy, and interconnected reality of health disparities.

Equally central to our mission is a deep commitment to academic integrity and

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COMMENTARY

methodological rigor. We view peer review not as a gatekeeping mechanism but as a collaborative and constructive process that strengthens scholarship and builds capacity within the global research ecosystem.

We do not believe that excellence in academic publishing must come at the cost of accessibility. As an open-access journal, Betta Health Equity is committed to democratizing knowledge. Knowledge locked behind paywalls is knowledge denied to those who need it most. Equity begins with inclusion—and that includes who reads, who writes, and who is cited. Our model supports global visibility and impact, ensuring that researchers, practitioners, and policy actors in both high-resource and resource-constrained settings have equal opportunity to share, engage with, and apply evidence that matters.

Our first issue is an exciting one. It features bold research and ideas from strategies to reduce substance use disorder challenges in Sierra Leone to the use of genomic surveillance for cholera control, from the application of artificial intelligence in child health to collaborative models aimed at strengthening pharmaceutical regulations across borders.

These studies reflect not only scientific rigor but also deep community engagement and contextually grounded solutions.

In a world where zip or postal codes are more influential than genetic codes in determining health outcomes, this journal takes a bold stand for dignity, justice, and the belief that health is a human right. We are unapologetically focused on those at the margins—not as subjects of study, but as co-creators of solutions. As we walk in the footsteps of scholars, activists, and frontline workers who have long fought for a more just world, we will amplify community-led innovations often overlooked by mainstream academia.

We are honored to embark on this journey to a future where the pursuit of health equity is not peripheral but central to scientific inquiry, and we extend a sincere invitation to all who are committed to equity, justice, and the public good. We invite you not just to read but to participate by joining us as contributors, reviewers, editors, mentors, advisors, funders, and collaborators in building a journal that reflects the world we strive to create.

Welcome to Betta Health Equity.