

What is power imbalance in research?

Power imbalance in family engagement in research can occur in situations where a researcher or a research team exercises - **unconsciously or consciously** - power over family research partners to **control** the process of the research. Power imbalance in family engagement in research can affect a family in ways that are contrary to:



- the family's interest,
- the trust relationship,
- the equal partnering relationship,
- the positive engagement of the family,
- the feeling of being respected,
- the family's voices being heard.

This power imbalance can be visible and recognized, but can also be invisible.

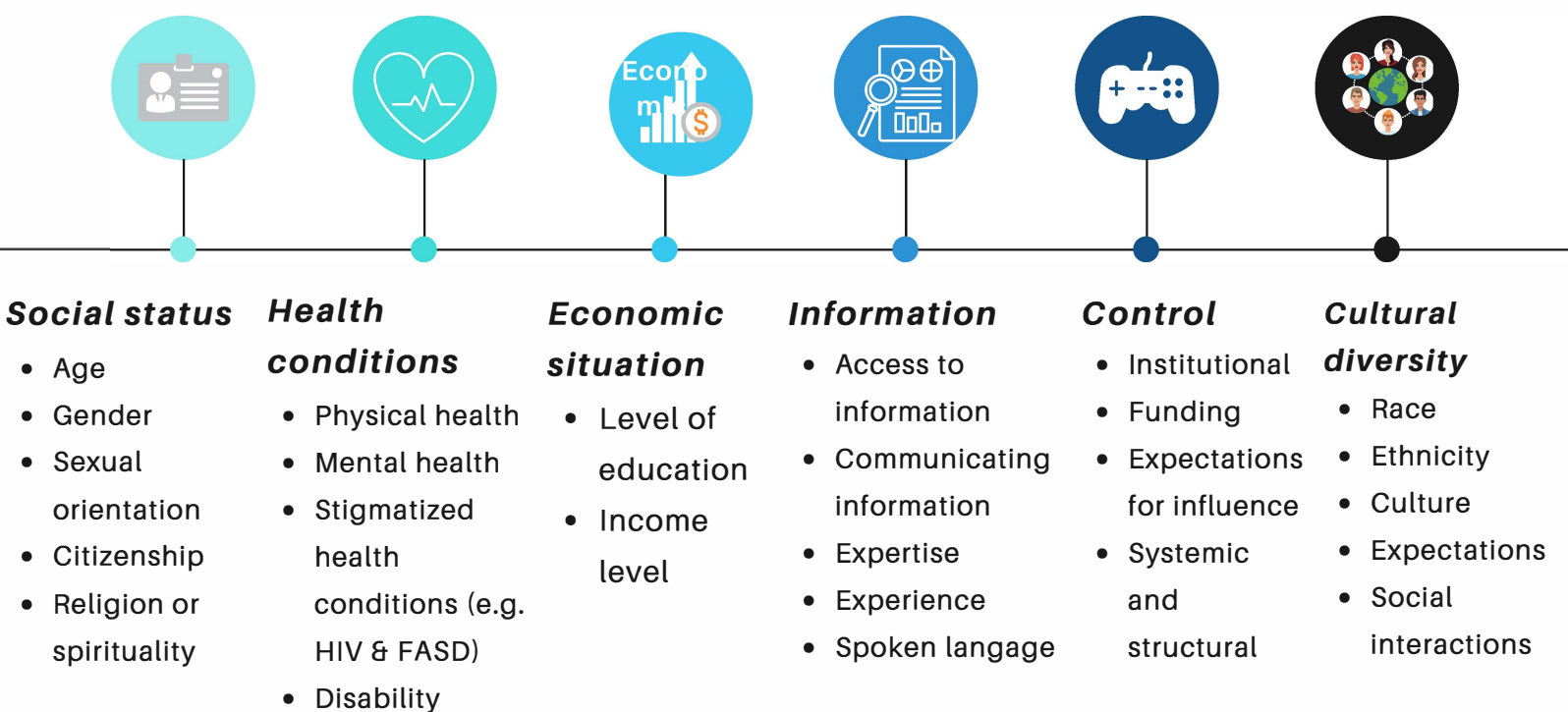
Power imbalance impacts the:

- Trust-building process
- Equal partnering relationship
- Positive and active engagement of the family
- Knowledge-building process.

Power imbalance generates a:

- Feeling of being less-valued
- Feeling of being in an unsafe environment
- Feeling of being unheard
- Feeling of being disconnected
- Feeling of demotivation.

Factors contributing to power imbalance



References

- Alberta SPOR Support Unit Patient Engagement Platform, 2020.
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research. (2020). Ethics guidance for developing partnerships with patients and researchers. https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/weekly_acquisitions_list-ef/2020/20-28/publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2020/irsc-cihr/MR4-86-2020-eng.pdf
- Lukes, S. (2005). Power: a radical view (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan. 200 p.

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