



**Society for Prevention Research
34th Annual Meeting
May 26 – May 29, 2026
Pre-conference Workshops, May 25, 2026
Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC**

Call for Papers

New Horizons in Prevention Science: Multilevel Interventions for Systemic Challenges

Multilevel interventions are increasingly recognized as necessary in prevention science, particularly where challenges span individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy. While decades of evidence support the potential of preventive interventions to improve behavioral (e.g., substance use, mental health) and physical (e.g., cardiovascular diseases, cancer) health outcomes, such interventions struggle to address social determinants of health which limits population-wide impacts. Social determinants of health are the “conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age” and as such represent upstream factors that determine health and health disparities ([Healthy People, 2030](#)). Preventive interventions targeting individual factors or a single-level may overlook broader contextual influences on health (Thimm-Kaiser et al., 2023). The [National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Framework \(2025\)](#) highlights the intersection between levels of influences and domains of influence and its role in determining individual, family/organizational, community, and population health. Multilevel interventions can be further enhanced by including multiple sectors (e.g. healthcare, education, housing, employment, transportation) to create integrated and transformative solutions that address interconnected needs, improve health outcomes, and reduce persistent disparities.

Definition of Multilevel Intervention

A coordinated approach that targets determinants of health and behavior across multiple levels of influence—such as individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy—to maximize and sustain preventive impact.

Thus, it is possible to conceptualize impactful preventative interventions that reach new horizons and address multiple risk and protective factors across multiple levels of influence and throughout the lifecourse. However, in practice, the science to evaluate the impact of multilevel interventions and support implementation remains limited. To fully assess the impact of multilevel interventions, new methodological approaches related to design, assessment, and analysis, are needed (Agurs-Collins et al., 2019). Beyond evaluation of the effectiveness of these interventions, focus is needed on implementation science to optimize their adoption across multiple contexts (Braithwaite et al., 2019). Multilevel interventions require tailored implementation strategies and have been understudied in settings beyond healthcare and behavioral health (Proctor et al., 2023). Advancing this work will require not only innovative conceptual frameworks, but also require analytic tools and robust partnerships across

disciplines, sectors, and communities to ensure interventions are contextually relevant, scalable, and sustainable in the real-world systems where interventions and services are delivered.

2026 Special Conference Themes

Each year, SPR selects three special themes designed to highlight specific areas of research relevant to prevention science and the overall conference theme. The SPR Conference committee encourages basic, epidemiological, etiological, intervention, and dissemination and implementation research submissions across these special themes. Consistent with this year's conference theme, *Multilevel Interventions for Systemic Challenges*, the SPR Conference Committee encourages special conference theme submissions related to pressing needs and the role of prevention science in three areas:

- (1) Multilevel interventions that explicitly address social determinants of health;
- (2) Methodological and data analytic considerations of multilevel intervention research including design, assessment, and statistical approaches;
- (3) Considerations to support implementation and dissemination of multilevel interventions including conceptual models, implementation strategies, engagement of community and sector partners, and ethical challenges.

While there is broad agreement on the importance of multilevel interventions, the scope, resources, and complexity required to carry out such studies present real challenges for the field. Accordingly, we also welcome work that advances the conversation by addressing methodological, conceptual, or practical issues that can move the field toward more feasible and impactful multilevel approaches. We also acknowledge the value of community-engaged research, particularly sessions that incorporate a community or practitioner perspective related to challenges and/or opportunities for multilevel interventions.

Thus, submissions need not describe a multilevel intervention per se; however, work must explicitly consider how findings transfer to multilevel contexts. Scholarship that explores intervention levels less frequently targeted (e.g., policy solutions) is also welcome.

Special Theme #1. Multilevel Interventions for Systemic Challenges: Social Determinants of Health

Despite a growing recognition of systemic supports for health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes as well as common and diverse pathways through which risk and protection are conferred, prevention science interventions are still predominantly focused on individual- or family-level versus community- and societal-level processes and outcomes. A shift towards designing multilevel interventions that focus on these more macro or distal determinants of health will involve changes in how interventions are designed as well as in thinking about defining immediate and longer-term outcomes. We seek submissions for this special theme that address:

- An explicit discussion of how the intervention addresses multilevel factors to improve health, wellbeing, or educational outcomes;
- The co-development of interventions and/or research, with community and/or in interdisciplinary teams, of interventions with attention to processes of team science;
- A process for applying/expanding current theoretical models to account for various social determinants of health; and

- Efforts to isolate the impact of intervention components across different levels.

Special Theme #2. Multilevel Interventions for Systemic Challenges: Methodological Considerations

To evaluate multilevel interventions new rigorous methods and statistical designs are needed. These methodological advances are needed to understand both the factors that support intervention implementation as well as to provide nuanced understanding of for whom and in what circumstances multilevel interventions are effective. In addition, designs need to be able to allow for the testing of impeding or synergistic intervention components. We seek submissions that contribute to this special theme that address:

- Use of flexible (e.g., adaptive trials), mixed methods, and/or quasi-experimental designs to understand impact of various components;
- Advances in understanding how to account for non-independence of samples as well as power calculations for interaction effects and moderation/mediation effects;
- The testing of multilevel interventions that account for nonlinear interactions, feedback loops with-and-between systems, and/or assess outcomes across levels; and
- Discussion of causal inference including relative intervention timing, cross-level moderation/mediation, and measurement.

Special Theme #3. Multilevel Interventions for Systemic Challenges: Implementation and Dissemination

Given that multilevel interventions include interacting multiple components across multiple levels, implementation science is foundational to both understanding and supporting intervention processes and sustaining preventative interventions. Implementation science is founded in a belief that both intervention and setting level factors are key determinants of intervention adoption, implementation, and sustainment. Also critical within this is an understanding of the balance between fidelity and adaptation and its role in sustainability of interventions. Finally, incorporation of more macro levels of interventions brings to the forefront new ethical considerations. We seek submissions that contribute to this special theme that address:

- Discussion of strategies for sustainment of multilevel interventions including understanding intervention and setting level characteristics as well as cost considerations;
- Planning and measurement of fidelity and/or adaptation of multilevel interventions and impact on outcomes; and
- Discussion of ethical considerations such as equity in access, burden, and outcomes of multilevel interventions, as well as informed consent and privacy and data protection for intervention participants.

General Conference Themes

Each year, the SPR Conference committee encourages basic, epidemiological, etiological, intervention, and dissemination and implementation research submissions across key themes that promote advances in prevention research.

Epidemiology and Etiology: Submissions focused on describing distributions and patterns of health (including but not limited to, e.g., anxiety, cancer, cardiovascular disease, depression, HIV/AIDS, injury, substance use disorders, violence) and on identifying risk and protective targets of preventive interventions are welcomed. Submissions with a developmental

and/or life-course approach, or that include genetic, neurobiological, health disparities, and/or contextual factors, are particularly encouraged.

Development and Testing of Interventions: Preventive interventions can be tested for efficacy under conditions of high quality-assurance and strong research designs and tested for effectiveness under real-world conditions in settings and systems and with diverse populations. Submissions reporting findings from efficacy or effectiveness trials (including pilot studies with preliminary outcome data) are welcomed. Submissions that combine the findings of such trials with one or more of the special conference themes are particularly encouraged.

Dissemination and Implementation Science: Dissemination, implementation, and translational science bridge the gap between research and everyday practice through a dynamic, collaborative process between the public health community and researchers. Submissions advancing scientific understanding of dissemination, implementation, and translation, including cost-efficient sustainability of preventive interventions into systems, are welcomed. Submissions that focus on program dissemination and implementation outcomes, dissemination and implementation processes, individual-, provider-, organizational-, and/or system-level factors, and community- and system-collaborator and decision-maker engagement are particularly encouraged.

Research, Policy, and Practice: Decision-makers around the world emphasize evidence-based policy reform. New policy initiatives at local, state, and national levels require scientific evidence to guide further policy change. Submissions that evaluate or estimate the effects of planned, new, or existing policies, examine the impact of efficacious programs in emerging policy contexts, or demonstrate how empirical research has been used to inform and guide new policies are welcomed. A wide variety of content areas are welcomed, including both emergent areas (e.g., autism, nutrition, suicide hotlines, school cell phone bans, AI) and ongoing areas (e.g., impacts of extreme weather, cancer screening, education policy, medication adherence, mental and physical health parity, obesity prevention) of concern. Submissions that describe and evaluate processes by which policies have been formed, developed, and implemented are encouraged. Submissions focused on international research or comparative research across policy contexts and submissions that combine findings of such research with one of the special conference themes are particularly encouraged.

Innovative Methods and Statistics: Submissions focused on “leading-edge” study designs and analytical approaches that address challenges to unlocking information contained in prevention science data, including studies on quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches, are welcomed. Submissions that use advanced methods and statistics but do not study directly a novel methodological or statistical question should be submitted to one of the other themes. Submissions addressing novel methodological or statistical challenges in studies addressing health disparities are particularly encouraged. Submissions should highlight the prevention science challenges that these innovative designs and approaches can address, as well as the benefits gained by using these techniques.

International Drug and Alcohol Use Prevention Poster Session: Posters should highlight research on the prevention of drug use, prevention of drug use in combination with alcohol use, or prevention of HIV/AIDS in the context of drug use or drug and alcohol use. A separate call for poster abstracts will be available mid-September.

Abstract Submission Instructions

All abstracts must be submitted online at www.preventionresearch.org.

**The online submission site is expected to open mid-September.
Submission Deadline: early November.**

For questions regarding online abstract submissions, the peer review process, or other details, please contact Jennifer Lewis by email at jenniferlewis@preventionresearch.org or by telephone at 703-934-4850, ext. 1.

Society for Prevention Research
11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax, VA 22030, USA
703-934-4850 (Phone)
info@preventionresearch.org
www.preventionresearch.org