



Conclusions of the AER Conference on Health Inequalities

Conclusions

Definition of health inequity

“Where systematic differences in health are judged to be avoidable by reasonable action globally and within society they are, quite simply, unjust. It is that we label health inequity”, (Commission on Social Determinants of Health)

Health inequalities in Europe: a European Health Divide

- Health inequalities are growing and moving eastwards
- Health inequalities within countries are growing too
- Some segments of the European population are moving backwards

Reducing Health Inequalities

If the European Union would succeed in reducing all inequalities by 10%, economic benefits would amount to 14 billion euros through gains in health as a “capital good”, 70 billion through gains in health as a “consumption good”, 18 billion euros through reduced health costs, and 6 billion euros through reduced social security costs (Economic implications of socio-economic inequalities in health in the European Union, DG SANCO, 2007).

“Health inequalities are very expensive, but this not why you should reduce them. It is an ethical imperative to reduce them.” (Denny Vågerö, Centre for Health Equity Studies-S)
“It is the fairness imperative that should guide politicians.” (Solange Ménival, Aquitaine-F)

A new perspective on development is needed

Economic growth may have negative externalities: financial crisis, climate change and environmental degradation. GDP/capita is therefore a very blunt way to measure economic development. We have to think of alternative ways to measure growth!

Health inequalities hit vulnerable groups of the population harder

- Gender inequalities: creating and seeing gender differences where there are none, gender stereotyping.
- Youth: don't approach youth as a homogenous group.
- People with disabilities: moving from charity and exclusion to citizens' rights and inclusion.

Health inequalities in the light of the economic crisis

Let's not wait and turn this economic crisis into a social one. We know enough now, the time is right.

All documents on the AER Conference on health inequalities including AER Background paper on the Impact of the economic crisis on health inequalities are available at:
<http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2010/healthinequalitiesfall2010.html>

