

### Equity in health: positions and implications

The debate about the relationships between equity and health has occupied an increasingly more relevant place in academic and political agendas around the world. If analysing equity has been on the agenda in the field of ethical theories about justice since the 1970s, then conceptual developments from the 1990s regarding equity in health has opened up the field of international debate which is still being energetically pursued nowadays.

Recognising the intolerable inequalities between populations' living conditions and results in health has become a matter having global dimensions today. This situation compels reflection about the presence of inequalities between population groups as defined by their geographical, ethnic, gender, economic, social and cultural characteristics and assessing them in whatever way aimed at understanding them thereby leads to rating them as being inequities. Adopting different ethical and political standpoints leads to assessing inequalities in health in different ways and to the state and social organisations proposing resolutions for overcoming them based on such assessment. Both the positions and their implications result from historical-social issues depending on the correlation of forces within and between nations in our contemporary globalised world.

The International Seminar entitled "Equity in Health: positions and implications" organised by the Universidad Nacional de Colombia's Interfaculty Public Health PhD programme, held in Bogotá from 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007 perhaps contributed towards this debate by bringing together some of the most important authors who have participated in and promoted analysis of the relationships between equity and health. The idea was to make evident ethical-political positions' diversity, their origin, development and implications within the setting of public policy and collective action and radical social and community mobilisation on behalf of equity in health.

This supplement brings together some of the presentations from the seminar, some corresponding to original articles and others to articles reflecting on conceptual aspects concerning equity in health, equity in health results, equity in health service-providing systems, equity in health and social class, gender and ethnic groups.

We are sure that the articles published here do contribute elements broadening the framework for discussion and provide tools for approaching equity in health. These reflections are thus made freely available for the academic community so that they can be used in other scenarios.

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