

Primary Health Care and Public Health: Foundations of Universal Health Systems.

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Abstract

The aim of this review is to advocate for more integrated and universally accessible health systems, built on a foundation of primary health care and public health. The perspective outlined identified health systems as the frame of reference, clarified terminology, and examined complementary perspectives on health. It explored the prospects for universal and integrated health systems from a global perspective, the role of healthy public policy in achieving population health, and the value of the social-ecological model in guiding how best to align the components of an integrated health service. The importance of an ethical private sector in partnership with the public sector is recognized. Most health systems around the world, still heavily focused on illness, are doing relatively little to optimize health and minimize illness burdens, especially for vulnerable groups. This failure to improve the underlying conditions for health is compounded by insufficient allocation of resources to address priority needs with equity (universality, accessibility, affordability). Finally, public health and primary health care are the cornerstones of sustainable health systems, and this should be reflected in the health policies and professional education systems of all nations wishing to achieve a health system that is effective, equitable, efficient and affordable.

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