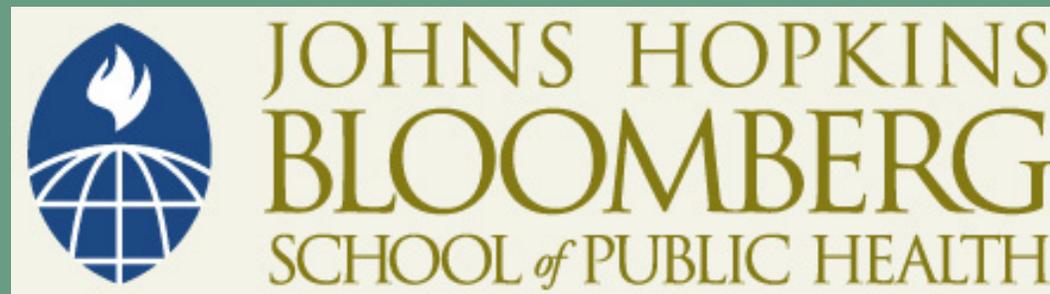


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JOHNS HOPKINS
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Section B

Issues Concerning Equity

Issues Concerning Equity

1. Relation of equity in health and health care to equity in general
 - Anything special about health?
 - Indeed there are hazards in insulating equity in health from broader issues of equity in society as a whole
 - Are there special criteria for a just distribution that apply to health issues but do not apply overall?
 - Many determinants of health are so woven into the fabric of society that the pursuit of health improvement must involve other sectors
 - Should health care allocation decisions be made on the basis of medical criteria alone?
 - Should distribution of health care be independent of wealth, power, or social position? Is this equivalent to distribution according to need?

Issues Concerning Equity (cont.)

1. Relation of equity in health and health care to equity in general (cont.)
 - But that leads to a bottomless pit and assumes that there should be no tradeoffs between health and other goods. It does not tell us to what level needs should be met. It would bar people from making their own tradeoffs between health and other goods.
 - Many feel that a concern with equity is better focused on the entire distribution of resources and burdens in society and that a narrow focus on health alone distorts broader concerns about justice
 - It may be that a monetary value must be put on human life if fair comparisons are to be made concerning resource allocations across all sectors
 - How do you do that?

Issues Concerning Equity (cont.)

2. Effects of privatization, structural readjustment, and withering of health care systems of the former socialist countries
3. Health or health care as a basic human right
4. Equity vs. utility–cost effectiveness

Special Issues for Cost-Effectiveness in the Equity Context

- Do all DALYs count equally?
 - A year of life of an infant
 - A year of life of a 30 year old
 - A year of life of a 75 year old
 - A year of life of a public health school dean
 - A year of life of a drug addict

- What costs and what benefits should count in cost-effectiveness analyses

- Should discount rates be applied to health care costs and benefits? (Healthy life itself? Or selected consequences, such as increased income, leisure time, community service, etc.?)

Special Issues for Cost-Effectiveness in the Equity Context

- What life expectancies should be used?
- How should states of health and disability be evaluated?
- What priority should be given to the sickest or worst off?
- When should small benefits to many receive priority to large benefits to a few?
- Fair chances (opportunities) vs. best outcomes?