



June 2026

Contents

- **International & European Institutions**
- **Research Developments**
- **In the Media**
- **Other News**

International & European Institutions



New WHO health inequality country profiles to track progress on achieving health equity

World Health Organization

A new interactive tool was released by WHO, flowing from its Fourteenth General Programme of Work. Achieving health equity is a global commitment, and this tool allows for a detailed analysis of the state of health inequalities in 195 countries, based on a total of 84 indicators, with some of them disaggregated in several dimensions. For both advocates and policy makers, this tool allows for a more targeted approach towards health equity.

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A historic decline in foreign aid: Preliminary 2025 ODA data

OECD

Amidst an increasingly challenging funding context, data from the Office for Economic Cooperation and Development paints a worrying picture; 2025 saw a historic decline in foreign aid. Particularly concerning is the decline from 5 of the largest funders; Germany, the US, the UK, Japan and France. Aside from these budget cuts, OECD also believes further cuts can be expected in following years which would have a large impact on crisis preparedness and developmental assistance.

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The Right to Health and the Triple Planetary Crisis

OHCHR

Crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and increasing pollution are closely linked to health. OHCHR underlines another dimension of this; they impact the right to health, with those at the highest risk disproportionately affected. Mental health, non-communicable diseases, access to medicines are directly affected by the triple planetary crisis. OHCHR states that protecting everyone's right to health is one of the best crisis responses we have at our disposal.

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Country health profiles - State of Health in the EU

European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

The 2025 report on the European Observatory's annual review of the state of health in Europe paints a worrying picture. Their synthesis shows that pressure on primary care is increasing, that accessibility is challenging to balance with affordability and innovation, and that access to health records is liable to great inequities.

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Digital health equity gaps remain, but solutions are becoming clearer, new report shows

WHO

A key question about increasing digitalisation of health systems, is whether it impacts accessibility. A WHO/Europe and Public Health Wales report shows that risks do exist in relation to language, income, location and disability status. This shows that, though digital transformation comes with opportunities, equity must be built in from the start.

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Gender Equality Index 2025: Sharper data for a changing world

Eurostat

In follow-up of the Roadmap on Women's Rights, it is good to see that some progress on gender equality can be noticed. Even so, full gender equality is at least 50 years away, which we now know better because there is a baseline and better indicators. When it comes to health, women report poorer health overall, while men partake in more unhealthy behaviours.

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Research Developments

nature

Gender inequalities in high psychological distress vary across European regions and occupational subgroups

Nature Scientific Reports

This new open access book is one of the first to approach the Social Determinants of Health from a place-based perspective, with a perspective transcending disciplines and covering the entire globe. Named the Social-Spatial Determinants of Health, this work covers the topic step by step, going from conceptualisation, to integration, methodology, and empiric illustration.

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Language barriers, mobility, and health equity: clinical risks, economic burden, and policy options for universal language access

International Journal for Equity

International mobility has increased, which means more people are engaging with healthcare systems in countries they do not speak the language of. As a result, language barriers have large impact on the ability to engage with those systems, impacting equity. This paper makes the case for universal language access as a core tool of healthcare systems to improve both the quality of those systems, and to ensure equity.

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Rethinking country classifications towards a more equitable global health future

The Lancet

Economies are often compared by analysing incomes, but this commentary states that this may mask health inequities, leading to misdirected global health funding. Issues among vulnerable populations are overlooked, which conceal weak health systems and high disease burdens despite what high income may imply. Considering these factors means that resources can be used in a more targeted manner, both within and between countries.

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Inequalities in Severe Maternal Morbidity and Mortality in High-Income Countries Patterns, Drivers, and Pathways to Action

Obstetrics & Gynecology

Severe Maternal Morbidity or SMM may be partly explained by clinical risk factors, but are also impacted by large inequities along lines of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and migration status. These factors impact health even before pregnancy. This creates an unequal burden, and indicates that awareness is required not only in healthcare, but also in wider society.

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The undue burdens of clinical trial participation: implications for equity, diversity, and inclusion

BMC

Clinical trials often underrepresent certain populations, creating skewed perspectives on public health. To achieve health equity, our research must provide a complete picture, and to do so we need an inclusive methodology for clinical trials. This paper provides a methodology on how to do so without placing additional burden on disadvantaged populations, ensuring robust scientific evidence and data.

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In the Media

The European Correspondent

Being Roma costs you eight years of your life

The European Correspondent

Roma and Traveller communities across Europe continue to face health inequities, Data from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights indicates a large life expectancy gap. Through testimonies - and a perspective from EPHA - poorer health outcomes are linked to to discrimination, inadequate housing, poverty, and barriers to healthcare access. This shows the need for cross-sector action to improve health equity.

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Air pollution linked to greater health risks in poorer European regions, study finds

Euronews

Air pollution impacts health, but does not respect borders. Even when air pollution levels are equal, research indicates that health impacts of air pollution are significantly greater in poorer European regions. Analysing data from 31 countries, researchers found that socioeconomic factors such as poverty, life expectancy, healthcare capacity, and investment in renewable energy strongly influence vulnerability to pollution-related deaths. The findings highlight how environmental risks and social inequalities interact, reinforcing the need for health equity approaches in air quality policy.

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Commission gender equality strategy targets women's health inequalities

EU Reporter

The European Commission has adopted its Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030, with a strong focus on reducing gender inequalities in health. Planned actions include a joint initiative with the World Health Organization to improve the quality and accessibility of women's healthcare, greater attention to sex and gender differences in medical research and medicines, and measures to address gaps in sexual and reproductive health services. The strategy also links health equity to broader efforts on gender-based violence and social inclusion.

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How Greece's local health units are expanding access to healthcare for vulnerable citizens

Euronews

Greece's network of Local Health Units (TOMY) is improving access to primary care for vulnerable populations through community-based services, referrals, and mental health support. Backed by €202.5 million from the European Social Fund+, the initiative aims to reduce health inequalities and strengthen access to care outside hospital settings. The model demonstrates how investment in community-based primary healthcare can support more equitable and accessible health systems across Europe.

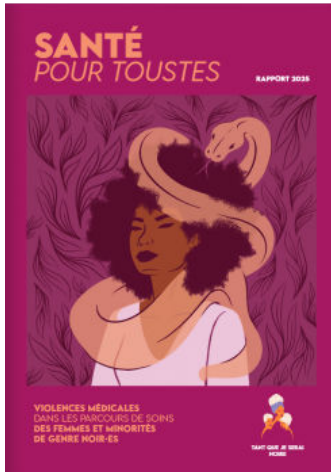
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Germany: Study finds institutional racism in public agencies

Deutsche Welle

A new German study has found evidence of institutional racism across a range of public services, including healthcare, with discrimination often embedded in organisational practices and decision-making rather than individual attitudes. The findings have renewed calls for reforms, including independent complaints mechanisms and anti-racism training. The article also includes a video report exploring the experiences of Black people within the German health system.

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Santé Pour Toustes: Pour une santé plus inclusive

Tant Que Je Serai Noire

(In French)

A report from Tant que je serai noire (France) entitled Santé pour toustes (Health for All), exposes racial and gender-based discrimination in the French healthcare system. Based on qualitative evidence, it documents verbal, psychological, institutional and physical violence experienced by Black women and gender minorities. By highlighting systemic and under-documented inequalities, the report calls for more inclusive, equitable care while providing insight on issues in the healthcare system that often go unnoticed.

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EPHA joins Permanent EU Anti-Racism Civil Society Forum

European Public Health Alliance

EPHA is proud to share that it has been permitted a place on the renewed Permanent Anti-Racism Civil Society Forum. The appointment recognises the contribution of EPHA's DisQo Stakeholder Network and allows for more direct engagement with the implementation of the EU's Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030. This provides a new opportunity for embedding health in anti-racism policy more fundamentally.

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Experts call for women's heart centres to tackle inequality in diagnosis & care

European Society of Cardiology

In a press release, the ESC calls for dedicated women's heart centres across Europe to address persistent inequalities in cardiovascular care. The report highlights that women are more likely to experience delayed diagnosis, under-treatment, and poorer outcomes despite cardiovascular disease being the leading cause of death among women. These specialised centres, combined with better training and research on women's cardiovascular health, could improve diagnosis, treatment, and quality of care.

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Why researchers may be getting mental health inequalities wrong

The Conversation

Experiences of racism permeate through all facets of life. One important way in which it impacts people, is through mental health. Though this is known, there is little research done on the topic, with the majority of mental health research focusing on non-racialised groups. This article provides suggestions on how racialised groups could be included more in research agendas from a community perspective.

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New book tackles racism in medicine

Oxford Population Health

To address various manifestations of racism in medicine, a new textbook called *Anti-Racist Medicine* was released. Developed by clinicians and academics, the 44-chapter volume combines historical analysis with concrete guidance for healthcare delivery, leadership, and education. It is aimed at both health professionals and students to raise awareness across the board on equitable and structurally aware healthcare practice.

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EPHA (AISBL) is the European Platform bringing together public health organisations representing health professionals, patients groups, health promotion and disease specific NGOs, academic groupings and other health associations.

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