



December 2024

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International & European Institutions

Experts support G20 action on pandemics and global health equity

UNAIDS

A report containing evidence pointing to an inequality-pandemics cycle points towards a different perspectives on how global health pandemics can be avoided. By looking at inequity as a core cause for such crises, it becomes clear that addressing social determinants is one of the most effective preventative measures.

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Harm reduction should be integrated into universal health coverage plans: UN expert

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

A report by Tlaleng Mofokeng at OHCHR highlights the importance of harm reduction in access to healthcare, especially for marginalised and stigmatised groups often targeted by punitive approaches. These communities must be central to Universal Health Coverage efforts.

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Self-perceived health statistics

Eurostat

An update has been provided from EU-SILC data, providing another insight into differences across Europe in self-perceived health. Some of the most interesting

differences noted on equity is the gap between men and women, along lines of income and education and between countries.

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Overcoming stigma and discrimination in pursuit of reducing antimicrobial resistance: a Swedish approach

WHO

During AMR awareness week, the WHO places attention on a Swedish model that focuses on counteracting stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings through respectful patient-provider communication. This helps lead to equitable access to care, mitigating AMR risks.

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Strengthen regulation of hazardous chemicals to stop gender-related health harms from toxic exposure: UN expert

OHCHR

The effects of environmental injustices disproportionately impact women. There are already deeply-rooted inequities that certain communities face simply in the place where they live. Addressing health inequities in this context means many things; to address environmental and reproductive justice, as well as racism and discrimination.

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Research Developments



Psychosocial factors mediate social inequalities in health-related quality of life among children and adolescents

BMC Public Health

Research from Switzerland adds to the strong narrative of socio-economic conditions being a large determinant for our health. Focusing on children and adolescents, the conclusion is that those with disadvantaged financial circumstances were more likely to have lower health-related quality of life, meaning this is an important consideration for health equity policy.

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Political polarization and health

Nature

One remarkable issue noted during COVID-19 was the political polarisation which also had an effect on health outcomes. This could be noted across different continents. A crucial learning of this is that the biological and social approach to health should be combined, and that political polarisation cuts across this as another important determining factor of our health.

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nature

Minority stress and psychological well-being in queer populations

Nature

Our mental health is influenced by many factors, for example minority stress. This research focuses on German-speaking countries and explores how queer individuals may face unique stressors that impact their mental health. This impact is significant and points to the need for needs and policies to ensure the queer community is not exposed to stressors anymore.

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Racism and health inequity: a global syndemic for children—the Lancet Commission on racism and child health

The Lancet

The latest Lancet Commission develops further on the structural effects that racism have on health. This time it focuses on its effects on the health of children. Whether it is structural racism faced by the parents or the children directly, the effects cut across sectors, systems and society. The Commission explores these and suggests policy solutions.

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Racial biases in clinical practice and medical education: a scoping review

BMC Medical Education

To address health inequities in France, reviewing the way racism and discrimination is represented in medical education can be of great use. This scoping review looked into a wide range of resources and concluded that available resources are still quite complex and that France requires a tool to ensure relevant teaching methods in its specific context.

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In the Media

The Brussels Times

'Not that bad': Belgium lags behind EU countries in cancer screening policies

The Brussels Times

During 2024's European Cancer Summit, the European Cancer Organisation released the Cancer Screening Policy Index. For Belgium, the score is a bit lower than for other Western European countries, but according to experts the situation is not that bad. A highlighted point for improvement was inequities in access to cancer tests.

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Hungary's most deprived people donate blood plasma to survive – photo essay

The Guardian

In eastern Hungary, where poverty is widespread, plasma donation has become a lifeline. Companies gamify the process, offering cash and prizes to incentivise donations, disproportionately attracting Roma communities. This highlights the intersection of social and commercial factors driving health inequities.

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We need a gender just transition for health systems and climate action

The BMJ

The climate and our health systems are closely related to each other, but our efforts to mitigate climate change and improve health are too divided. Arthur Ngétic writes in this opinion piece about that we must approach these crisis in tandem by looking at structural drivers of health inequities. These drives cut across society, impacting both these crisis. He calls particular attention to a just transition also focusing on specific gender needs.

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People living with HIV still face discrimination

Deutsche Welle

Commemorating World Aids Day on 1 December, among other things, attention is called to stigmatisation and discrimination faced by HIV-positive people. The story of Yana Kolpakova from Russia provides a reminder of the many barriers still in place. Whether in the healthcare system or in daily life, the effects show that government action is strongly needed.

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Other News



Healthcare Readiness Index 2023

GLOBSEC

In the annual ranking of health preparedness of national health systems, stark inequities become once again visible. Globsec's yearly report once again underlines the east-west divide, as well as the urban-rural divide.

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Racial and Socioeconomic Health Disparities in Peripheral Artery Disease

JAHA

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) is a disease affecting over 200 million people worldwide, yet a fraction of patients are actually diagnosed, leading to a wide range of issues such as stroke, limited ambulation and amputation. Research from the US now shows that disparities exist along lines of racism and social determinants.

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National Academies calls to change how biomedical research uses race and ethnicity

STAT

Racism in the healthcare setting is an often discussed topic. The difference between looking at it as a social and as a biological construct means that it must be approached with great care. Researchers from the US suggest how racial and ethnic categories can be applied in healthcare without reinforcing harmful biological perspectives, instead focusing on its underlying structural implications.

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Women's Health Plan for Wales launched to close the gender health gap

Welsh Government

Wales is releasing a ten-year women's health plan with a comprehensive approach to closing the gender health gap. With funding for research, as well as plans for healthcare access, access to healthcare for women should be improved. It focuses on a wide range of topics, including menstrual health, sexual and reproductive health, healthy aging and violence against women and girls.

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TBCT Publishes Seven Infographics on Breast Cancer Inequalities in the European Union

TBCT

For October as Breast Cancer Awareness Months, TBCT has called attention to inequalities when it comes to this form of cancer. Not only does it call attention to the overall numbers, it also focuses on the differences in rates, for example along lines of level of education and between countries.

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Trans Health Map 2024: As WHO guidelines approach, healthcare for trans people in the EU still hindered by stigma and long delays

TGEU

Trans Europe and Central Asia has launched an interactive map which facilitates finding trans-specific healthcare across EU member states. Trans people in Europe face many barriers in their access to healthcare, meaning a tool like this is an important step towards ensuring trans people can realise their right to health.

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