

research snapshot

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Canada's "Healthy Living Strategy" Does Not Consider the Issue of Health Inequality

What is this research about?

The "Healthy Living Strategy" in Canada looks at the impact of individual lifestyle choices on the health of people today. However, it ignores other important socio-economic factors that create health inequity. Income inequality and social exclusion influence a person's ability to be healthy. Health is primarily affected by such social determinants, and without action, justice for the good health of all Canadians is limited.

What did the researcher do?

The researcher looked at the different ways people experience social exclusion in health. This included cases of poverty and income disparity, as well as systemic discrimination. There was a growing gap between household incomes that were earned, and health policy also created or reproduced disadvantages for certain groups. Finally, the researcher looked at possible solutions for distributive justice, by considering income distribution.

What did the researcher find?

The researcher found that while the economic

What you need to know:

While the economic market offers us the opportunity to earn income and allocate spending towards health, not everyone has the equal amount of resources to access these opportunities. Thus, just distribution of resources needs to be considered around policies on health and income in order to create equality.

market is open for all to participate in, access to these markets or to work was not equal. Some reasons for this included:

- Non-market activities like child rearing were not given monetary value (this affected women the most).
- Safety net programs for unvalued work offered very little support.
- The value of financial wealth did not reflect the real assets that exist for companies, and so the opportunity to create more wealth for the public was limited.

Thus, the researcher found that creating opportunity for all people to achieve good health came with a just distribution of resources.

Resources should also be distributed by recognizing both the actual and potential social contribution of people. The researcher also recommended that there should be more social investment in areas like health and education.

How can you use this research?

This research may be useful for those in both the non-profit and private sectors, so that they consider the different needs and rewards of social investment today. It may also offer government sectors some insight to reassess the way social funding is utilized and its impact on the public.

About the Researcher

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