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epha health equity feed

October 2025

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International & European Institutions



Commission publishes report on action to enhance access to healthcare

European Commission

To drive discussions on the interplay between healthcare access and social inequalities, the European Commission has published a report that shows concrete tools to reform healthcare in a way to reduce income inequality. It focuses on three topics, being distributional impact, equitable healthcare, and evidence-based decision making. It provides extra evidence on how the social determinants play a pivotal role in our health, but are also directly relevant in the social context.

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WHO launches Health Inequality Monitoring Network to catalyse progress towards health equity

World Health Organization

A decisive approach towards realising health equity requires strong monitoring efforts across the globe. To facilitate such monitoring, WHO launched a Health Inequality Monitoring Network (HIM). Its main goals are to strengthen monitoring capacity, to generate evidence, and to develop monitoring tools. The network already consists of a wide range of members from across several WHO regions, and is anticipated to be further expanded in early 2026.

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SDG 3: Good health and well-being

Eurostat

To measure the health and wellbeing of the European population, Eurostat refers to Sustainable Development Goal 3: good health and well-being. Eurostat monitors this mainly through rates of smoking prevalence between population groups and member states. Numbers from 2023 indicate that inequities are still quite stark, between men and women, but also between member states. This indicates significant efforts are required for health equity within and between countries in Europe.

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Women, older people, migrants and persons with disabilities are key to tackling EU skills and labour shortages

European Commission

The 2025 Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) report has been released. It gives a clear overview of inequities amongst certain groups in particular. On health, it also points to the need for health working lives and work-life balance. Given that employment is an important social determinants of health, this report is highly relevant to health equity.

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Health system strengthening interventions to improve the health of displaced and migrant populations in the context of climate change

World Health Organization

As part of the Global Evidence Review on Health and Migration series, WHO releases its 7th report on the health needs of migrants and displaced populations. Focusing specifically on the context of climate change, it compared 95 health systems across six health system building blocks. The main recommendations centre around how these health systems need to be updated to see to health needs of these two populations

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UNICEF-WHO-The World Bank: Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (JME) — Levels and Trends – 2025 edition

UNICEF

A child's development depends largely on their access to nutrition. Malnutrition is linked to issues like stunting, wasting and over- and underweight. A joint report by UNICEF, the WHO and the World Bank takes stock of the situation in 2025 and shows insufficient progress towards eradication of child malnutrition. A lack of data makes this difficult to analyse in detail, but it is clear that increased action is needed.

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Research Developments

Reducing inequalities in cardiovascular disease: focus on marginalized populations considering ethnicity and race

The Lancet

Health inequities manifest in different ways across gender, race and ethnicity. The Lancet has tried to further clarify what this looks like in a new Series, focusing on Europe and America. Research shows that the burden is higher among certain racialised groups, as well as among women. The study proposes solutions mainly around improving monitoring efforts, community-based action, and universal access to medication and screening.

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European digital transformation for Roma girls' health: the case of Spain

Frontiers

Younger generations are generally considered digital natives, but inequities may still persist. The digital determinants of health play a large role in that, and impact our ability to engage with digital health tools from the individual up to the societal level. Researchers from the University of Sevilla with policy managers from the European Public Health Alliance have applied this model to the reality of Roma girls in Spain, exploring how their usage of digital tools relates to their (digital) health literacy.

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The Lancet One Health Commission: harnessing our interconnectedness for equitable, sustainable, and healthy socioecological systems

The Lancet

Though life expectancy has increased significantly over the past century, human health is increasingly threatened by a wide range of public health crises. Ecosystems are under strain by climate change, antimicrobial resistance, and re-emerging infectious diseases, to name a few. The Lancet One Health Commission has released another issues explaining the structures behind health ecosystems, adding further evidence to the need of a One Health approach.

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The commercial determinants of maternal health

NPJ Women's Health

To date, no research was done on the impact of commercial determinants on maternal health. The activities done by commercial actors have very real and specific effects on the health of mother and child before, during, and after pregnancy. Whether the use of alcohol, or the smoking of cigarettes, commercial influences can directly harm mother and baby. This research provides another perspective on how we should balance human social, economic and environmental potential

READ MORE

The interplay of social and family environments in shaping adolescent health behaviours: a population-based study

Public Health

Health behaviour is dependant on much more than just our individual choices. Aside from commercial influence, the socio-economic context also plays a large role. Research from Geneva, Switzerland, looked into the social and family environment of adolescents and found that individuals at lower socioeconomic status were more likely to smoke, consume soda daily and do less sports.

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Experiencing stigmatization during the COVID-19 pandemic: a qualitative study among healthcare workers

BMC Infectious Diseases

It is no secret that healthcare workers were under significant stress during COVID. Research from Germany now also shows that they were faced with stigmatisation as well, through different channels. People kept distance, resulting in reduced quality of life, forcing healthcare workers into cognitive coping strategies. There was also an inequity dimension, with women, nurses and young people the most impacted.

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Barriers to healthcare for racialised populations in Europe: a scoping review of reviews

International Journal for Equity in Health

Structural societal issues, such as racism, have very real effects in how people engage with healthcare systems. A new review of existing literature provides an overview of some of barriers faced by racialised individuals, particularly regarding availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality. Issues were identified particularly around interpretation, mediation, administrative procedures, costs, and insensitive practices. A lot of work remains to be done to fully realise the right to health.

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In the Media



The far-right and health: an evolving political crisis

The Lancet

in 2022, the Lancet released a landmark publication on racism, discrimination and xenophobia in health. Now, three years later, that article has only increased in relevance. In this editorial, an observation is made on increased far-right nationalism in political discourse and calls on the medical community to speak out against this. Racism, discrimination and xenophobia are fundamental determinants of health, meaning that they need to be addressed through calling these issues out for what they are. Health equity can only be achieved through refusing to normalise systemic racism.

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Racist voices are becoming louder and moving into the mainstream. How can I help my client feel safe?

The Guardian

Experiences of racism and discrimination in healthcare take many forms, and can be quite difficult to recognise and be aware of. Healthcare workers that are keenly aware of these experiences are of great value. In this piece, Ahona Guha describes experiences she has seen with her clients, that have helped her improve the way in which she addresses these issues. The key is making people feel understood and to not take it personally, as a way to empower people.

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Why words matter in public health

King's College London

The term 'vulnerable' is often used when analysing health equity. Though its use is in most cases simply meant to convey inequities, it can have a stigmatising effect. Ellis Logan of KCL noticed in her research that people who may be 'vulnerable' in crisis settings, do not identify with the term which may make disaster response more difficult. This requires a conscious update of terminology used in these settings.

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Editorial: World Health Day 2024: frontiers in public health presents: “My health, my right”

Frontiers

Researchers from the UK and Poland reflect on World Health Day 2024 and where we stand when it comes to health equity. A wide range of research papers are mentioned to illustrate issues, but also suggest solutions. The main focus is the empowerment of the individual. As members of communities, systemic issues while always flow down to the personal level, meaning solutions require empowerment at the level where people engage with the healthcare system.

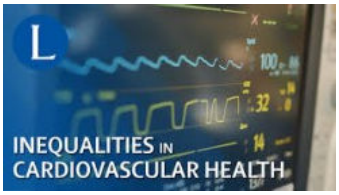
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'We need a broader perspective on innovations to advance a women and health agenda

The BMJ

Innovations in biotech have played a large role in allowing us to live healthier lives. These benefits, however, have not been shared equally, and women continue to face disproportionate inequities in comparison to men. This requires a fundamentally different approach to how these solutions are designed, through an intersectional lens, including women in design, and setting bold new goals for gender equity in health innovation.

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Video: Inequalities and Disparities in Cardiovascular Health

The Lancet

As discussions in Europe around cardiovascular health increase with negotiations on the cardiovascular health plan, the Lancet released a series on the matter. In this video, four professors from different fields narrate the state of play of CVDs and equality in Europe.

WATCH HERE

Other News



Social inequalities in health in the EU

EuroHealthNet

In order to counter health inequities, it is helpful to know the size of the problem. Together with the Centre for Health Equity Analytics (CHAIN), EuroHealthNet has released a report on the state of play in Europe. It shows that, though the general standard of health is improving, inequities remain stark or are worsening. The report recommends a focus on reducing equities through policy, healthcare, data and tools.

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Rethinking solidarity in health: Healing Europe's fractured social contract - Eurohealth

European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

Ahead of the 2025 European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), the latest issue of Eurohealth focuses on health in relation to solidarity, trust and a shared responsibility. With sections on women's health, the environment, mental health, and the social contract, the publication provides an inspiration for the discussions to take place in September and October.

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The United States withdrawal from the world health organization (WHO), its implications for global health governance

BMC Globalization and Health

With significant developments in global health governance, a fundamentally different approach may be required. The United States' decision to pull out of the WHO is a significant factor of global instability. If these effects are to be countered, the WHO will have to change its governance through improved transparency, accountability and efficiency, with a larger role for regional health organisations.

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The psychological impact of inequality – and how it destroys our communities

LSE International Inequalities

Health equity is closely connected to social capital and social fabric. No wonder then, that when inequality in a country increases, the tearing of that social fabric plays a large role in causing health inequities. A lack of trust, a democratic backslide, they all lead to effects that ultimately impact our health, reducing life expectancy and causing mental ill-health among other things.

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Why are ethnic minority groups falling behind on vaccines?

BBC

Data on childhood vaccines in the UK was broken down by ethnicity for the first time, and it shows concerning developments. Vaccination uptake appears to be lower in children of Caribbean and Black heritage. The reason for this is expected to be a lack of trust in organisations that promote the vaccines, or systems more broadly. Vaccination programmes can address this, but require further equality data and government support.

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Upcoming Events



Racism, Discrimination and health: 2025 Edition

OHCHR

29 October 9:30-17:30, Hybrid

As the third instalment of the Racism, Discrimination and Health series, this one-day workshop on health and racism explores cultural expression can acknowledge and heal racial trauma. Participants will engage in discussions on strengthening cultural rights, intersectional approaches, and developing actionable EU-level policy recommendations.

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Call for Abstracts – 18th World Congress on Public Health

WFPHA

Deadline - 30 November

For the annual World Congress on Public Health in 2026, WFPHA is looking for abstracts. This is your chance to drive the discussion based on a strong paper, for example through a workshop, speech, or poster proposal. EPHA is also a member of WFPHA, meaning EPHA members are eligible to a reduced WFPHA member rate.

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