

Appendix F

Economical aspects

To assess the available resources, healthcare costs are usually expressed in the percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a given country. Relating measures of healthcare expenditure, such as GDP and GDP/per capita purchasing power parity (PPP) allow comparisons of living standards and healthcare spending among countries.

The countries of the European Union and Europe in general are considered a wealthy. In these countries on average 5 to 11% of the GDP are spent on healthcare. By comparison in the countries of Africa the spending on health care ranges between < 1 and about 8% of the GDP. Thus, in Europe GDP spending on health care per capita are about 12.000 and 41.000 US Dollars while in the countries of Africa it ranges between ca. 500 to 10.000 US Dollars. However, health care spending in the total amount of the US dollars needs to account for the disease burden in individual countries. In addition, the effectiveness of spending needs to be considered. While in the wealthy countries high level of care allowing implementation of the latest high-technology and of the results of medical research is common, in the less fortunate countries frequently even basic medical care and hygiene required for disease prevention are missing. In the 2020 report of the *World Health Organization Global Spending on Health; Weathering the Storm* covering spending on health care between 2000 and 2018 in 190 countries the staggering differences in terms of the disease burden and economic provisions between the high- and low- income countries teaches the sobering lesson. Even a perfunctory reading conveys the message; low-income countries are home of unmet health needs, famine and poverty are a soil of all kinds of diseases dominated by the largely avoidable serious infectious diseases. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all countries but the low-income countries were hit the hardest. To balance this humongous inequity is the task ahead. based on Oxfam estimated that 8 world's richest men now own the same amount of wealth as the world's poorest 3.6 billion people. Such gross disparities undermine social contracts and need to be corrected. As stated by Gelinsky *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, including the protection of human dignity (Art. 1), the right to life (Art. 2), the right to personal integrity (Art. 3), protection from inhuman treatment (Art. 4), equality before the law (Art. 20), and protection from discrimination (Art. 21). The Charter also protects the rights of the elderly (Art. 25) and establishes a right to health care (Art. 35). It protects clinicians through its clause on freedom of conscience (Art. 10).* The above-mentioned standards guarantee fundamental human rights establishing an operational framework for action on the part of government agencies. Yet, thus far correction of inequity among the nations and their populaces appears to be low on the political agenda when compared with the importance of geopolitical conflicts and even environmental protection. Empowering the low-income countries while providing economical and know-how support is the path ahead and the responsibility of economically privileged nations. However, even in wealthy countries wealth is not guaranteed. The economic downturns due to global financial, environmental and political crises will have inevitably negative impact on the health care budgets. Reordering the political priorities will be needed to assure the survival of the human species and humanity.

Further reading

- https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Healthcare_expenditure_statistics
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23288604.2018.1510287>
- <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=PL-GR-PT-DE-EU>
- Wilkinson R, Pickett K. Tacking inequality takes social reform. Nature 2022;606:643-4.
- Gelinsky K. Triage recommendations: a cross-border perspective; A survey of European Intensive care physicians. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. <https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/7995358/Triage+Recommendations+-+A+Cross-Border+Perspective.pdf/01e7598b-4336-81ac-701a-a605b32299c7?version=1.0&t=1608045877324>
- World Health Organization Global Spending on Health; Weathering the Storm. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240017788>