

Integrating social determinants of health in the universal health coverage monitoring framework

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Underpinning the global commitment to universal health coverage (UHC) is the fundamental role of health for well-being and sustainable development. UHC is proposed as an umbrella health goal in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda because it implies universal and equitable effective delivery of comprehensive health services by a strong health system, aligned with multiple sectors around the shared goal of better health. In this paper, we argue that social determinants of health (SDH) are central to both the equitable pursuit of healthy lives and the provision of health services for all and, therefore, should be expressly incorporated into the framework for monitoring UHC. This can be done by: (a) disaggregating UHC indicators by different measures of socioeconomic position to reflect the social gradient and the complexity of social stratification; and (b) connecting health indicators, both outcomes and coverage, with SDH and policies within and outside of the health sector. Not