

Poverty, social inequalities and health: challenges for public policies

Within the contemporary context, studies and surveys conducted in several countries - including Brazil - have embodied new analytical benchmarks and interdisciplinary approaches in order to move ahead with discussions on the interfaces among living conditions, poverty and health. Along this path, the construction of a health promotion stance linked to monitoring experiences in sustainable development and social participation; the appearance of new discussion forums on the multiple dimensions of inequities in health and the ongoing presence of the issue of poverty at many events, seminars and congresses in the collective health field indicate that we are living in a context that fosters reflection and new learning processes.

This themed issue thus intends to contribute to conceptual and methodological reflections on poverty, social inequalities and health, as well as analysis and oversight of the outcomes and impacts of public interventions intended to ease utter poverty and enhance citizenship. On this aspect, particular attention is paid to studying the formulation and implementation processes of conditional cash transfer programs, as these institutional arrangements have developed into a marked trend in the social policies and programs field in Brazil and elsewhere in the world. Examining the specific characteristics of the Brazilian and Latin American contexts, where stresses triggered by labor crises are wound even tighter by long-accrued social disadvantages and flimsy social safety-nets provided by public systems, these papers provide a sounding-board for the challenges of developing alternative paths to integration that avoid the naturalization of poverty and the stigmatization of the poor.

At same time, the task of steering social healthcare, education, food security, welfare and job placement programs towards convergence through intersectoral actions is fraught with difficulties, facing the prospects of equity and social justice. However, we hope and expect that this invites readers to share the interdisciplinary vocation of the Collective Health field, updating public commitments to the right to health and well-being.

Rosana Magalhães, Luciene Burlandy, Mônica de Castro Maia Senna

Guest Editors