

Health policy influences on healthcare provision and access to medical care

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Abstract

The presentation focusses on different modes of health policy that help to explain why some countries are more successful in translating monetary inputs into healthcare personnel than other countries. The results indicate that policies which favor self-regulation by non-governmental actors lead in general to high levels of healthcare providers at above OECD average health expenditure. Policies which favor direct state control, on the other hand, are characterized by lower levels of healthcare providers and below average health expenditure. Countries that give market mechanisms higher priority than other countries seem to offer below average numbers of healthcare providers at comparatively high total costs.

The second part of the presentation discusses the impact of health policies on patients' access to medical care. It focusses on how access regulations affect ambulatory healthcare usage and in particular disparities in utilization among groups with different educational and income levels. The data indicate that access regulation affects patients' decisions to see a doctor and reduces the extent of specialist healthcare used. Cost sharing could not be related to inequities among income groups; however, gatekeeping has favorable effects on reducing inequality, and the respective healthcare systems show lower levels of inequality among groups with different levels of education.

CLAUS WENDT, M.A., Ph.D., a 2008-09 Harkness/Bosch Fellow of Health Policy & Practice at Harvard School of Public Health and J. F. Kennedy Fellow at Harvard's Center for European Studies, is professor of sociology of health and healthcare systems at Siegen University. Wendt's research interests include institutional theory, political sociology, international comparisons of welfare states and healthcare systems, and the sociology of health. From 2012 to 2015 he is directing a 850,000 Euro-Project on *Healthcare-Seeking by Older People in Germany. The social and institutional context of decision-making in the case of sickness*, funded by DFG. He has edited (with Ted Marmor) two volumes on *Reforming Healthcare Systems* (Edward Elgar, 2011) and has written more than 30 peer-reviewed journal articles. For his article *Translating Monetary Inputs into Health Care Provision* he was awarded the prize for the best JCPA article 2010. Wendt holds a Ph.D. summa cum laude in sociology and a master's degree in political science, sociology, and economics from Heidelberg University.



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