Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool (Urban HEART)

The goal of Urban HEART is to support cities in addressing health inequities to determine the most appropriate interventions (Novoa et al., 2018) by focusing action on social, economic, and environmental determinants of health (Prasad, 2018).

The WHO’s efforts, city and national officials, and academics and researchers developed Urban HEART from 2007 to 2010 (Prasad, 2018; Prasad et al., 2013), born out of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) (Prasad, Borrell, Mehdipanah, & Chatterji, 2018).

The goal is to support cities in addressing health inequities to determine the most appropriate interventions (Novoa et al., 2018) by focusing action on social, economic, and environmental determinants of health (Prasad, 2018). In other words, Urban HEART is a tool largely designed for cities, to assess priority areas and respond through action to combat inequity. The assessment and response components are key in Urban HEART (Kumaresan, Prasad, Alwan, & Ishikawa, 2010).

Research question

How does the World Health Organization (WHO) approach health equity in cities across the world?

Aim

This research aims to understand how WHO Technical Officers and member state civil servants involved in Urban HEART understand equity.

Interviews

Synchronous electronic interviews with key informants (total of 77 participants).

Preliminary observations

- Recognition of the importance of equity in health
- No consistent understanding of what the goal of Urban HEART is
- Importance of political will emphasized by many
- Urban HEART directly and indirectly led to actions to address health inequity

www.michelleamri.com


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