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# Just Health Care?

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## **Problems with distributive principles: The impossibility of health.**

In attempting to address the issue of justice in the provision of health care, it has often been assumed that the central focus of the problem is health itself. The primary justification for the provision of health care is thought to be the maintenance or maximization of health and that distributive principles concerned with the allocation of health care should therefore focus on the distribution of health via the mechanism of health care. However, it is my contention that this focus is mistaken. It is mistaken because there is no solution to the problem of conceptually defining health. Any attempt to conceptually define health, results in circularity. However, without an agreed inter-subjective measure of health, distributive principles are unable to determine the relative position of individuals in relation to the resource to be distributed or in relation to each other. That is, we have no way of determining whether the distribution of resources makes any given individual better or worse off in relation to health. Thus, distributive principles that focus on the provision of health care as a means of distributing health are fundamentally flawed. Rather, I suggest that access to health care itself should be seen as the resource to be distributed and that our justifications for being concerned with the distribution of health care are not reducible to concerns about inequalities in individual health.