



Health Justice: An Argument from the Capabilities Approach

Sridhar Venkatapuram

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Social factors have a powerful influence on human health and longevity. Yet the social dimensions of health are often obscured in public discussions due to the overwhelming focus in health policy on medical care, individual-level risk factor research, and changing individual behaviours. Likewise, in philosophical approaches to health and social justice, the debates have largely focused on rationing problems in health care and on personal responsibility. However, a range of events over the past two decades such as the study of modern famines, the global experience of HIV/AIDS, the international women's health movement, and the flourishing of social epidemiological research have drawn attention to the robust relationship between health and broad social arrangements.

In *Health Justice*, Sridhar Venkatapuram takes up the problem of identifying what claims individuals have in regard to their health in modern societies and the globalized world. Recognizing the social bases of health and longevity, Venkatapuram extends the 'Capabilities Approach' of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum into the domain of health and health sciences. In so doing, he formulates an inter-disciplinary argument that draws on the natural and social sciences as well as debates around social justice to argue for every human being's moral entitlement to a capability to be healthy.

An ambitious integration of the health sciences and the Capabilities Approach, *Health Justice* aims to provide a concrete ethical grounding for the human right to health, while advancing the field of health policy and placing health at the centre of social justice theory.

With a foreword by Sir Michael Marmot, chair of the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health.

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