

Editorial Preface

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The *International Journal of Public and Private Perspectives on Healthcare, Culture, and the Environment (IJPPPHCE)* in this issue presents five articles, each providing new insights and ideas linking in various ways the relationships between healthcare, economy, society and culture.

Dr. Sabrina Ching Yuen Luk in her article ‘Universal Health Insurance Reform in China: Challenges, Responses and the Way Forward’ summarizes the past and present challenges of health insurance system in China. The author analyzes critically the policies in Chinese social, historical and political context and through introducing alternative theoretical models and relevant international comparisons is able to show how the health insurance system in China could be developed and improved. The official position of Chinese government is that China has already achieved universal health insurance coverage for its population of over 1.3 billion people. In reality, however, many insured people still have difficulties in accessing a range of essential services and face high out-of-pocket medical expenses. Meanwhile, the uninsured people lack access to basic and affordable health care. The government still has a long way to go to achieve universal health coverage. The author argues that in order to achieve UHC, the Chinese government has to make unremitting efforts to ensure financing equity between urban and rural insured participants, access to affordable health care and the financial sustainability of medical insurance funds. The problem of rapidly aging population unavoidably imposes pressure on the medical insurance system. It is expected that the implementation of a pilot scheme that integrates medical and nursing care for the elderly and a pilot long-term care insurance scheme for disabled elderly can provide better financial protection and quality of medical services for the elderly. The challenges and problems outlined in this research are by no means unique in contemporary world. In health insurance and future challenges of healthcare China has far more similarities with many other countries than has often been noted. However, the sheer size of Chinese population and health system, together with marked differences between urban and rural areas, makes the issue more complicated.

In the second article ‘A Case Study on Implementing A Continuum of Care Based on Client Needs’ by Bonnie H.Y. Wong, William Y.W. Leung, Maria Chu, and Kwong Y. Liu the authors link the issues of health care and culture/ ethnicity and provide a very informative piece of research on the ‘client needs’ among the Chinese Canadian population in Toronto. This article examines the continuum of care in use at the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The service continuum is a response to the needs of a diverse Chinese Canadian population, where services in the appropriate language and culture are limited. Within the funding context, service coordination for seniors within Ontario can be characterized as fragmented, with over-use of acute care hospitalization and long-term care institutionalization. Community agencies must find a way to adapt to changing systems as the Ontario government shifts back and forth between institutionalization and community care approaches. This article explores challenges that are faced by a socially-minded organization within a medically-minded funding system. Of course, such concerns are typical to health care organizations, but the special ethnic profile of the clients brings in also the issue of culture and ethnicity.

It appears that this article insights that are relevant and have much use in any attempts to identify clients' individual needs regardless of their background. As the authors point out, to be a truly client-centred provider, it is necessary to design services according to clients' individual needs and not according to how and what part of the program is funded. Clients should not be expected to "fit" into the services that are made available through funding but should be part of the dialogue in developing services that meet their needs. Yee Hong has conducted two needs studies, one in the 1980s and the other in the 2010s, with ongoing communication with clients and caregivers to ensure that their needs are met. As a result, Yee Hong has tried to form service strategies according to the feedback, developed a continuum of care based on client needs, and made a commitment to these programs by bearing the cost of services not funded by the government. In short, communication and dialogue are the first steps to improve client-centred care.

In the third article 'Medicaid Expansion: Policy Impact on Home and Community-based Services' Mary Schmeida and Ramona McNeal analyze the politically sensitive issues of Medicaid and how the United States is going to fund and administer the long-term care for the aged, and especially the poor among them. After the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act not all states chose to expand their Medicaid long-term care program despite the financial incentive, but instead they still continue spending on nursing facility care despite the less costly option of community care. This article analyzes why some states have been so reluctant to expand long-term care into the community. The conclusion of the article is that the political factors largely explain why and how the states have tackled this issue. The issue remains politically divisive in the United States and this article provides good material also for political scientists who want to understand present evolving American politics.

John Fawsitt in his article 'Reading in the Humanities in the Mobile Digital Age' analyzes the basic issues of human intellectual pursuits and how the society and educational policies have responded to changes taking place in 'reading' and 'thinking'. Reading, accompanied by discussion and writing, has long been the staple of a humanist education. It is felt that exposure to and the process of trying to understand other thinkers and their ideas enriches and trains the human mind to comprehend and evaluate their existences, world, and values and to use this knowledge to live a richer and better life whatever they judge that to be. The changes brought about by the advance of science have altered our perceptions and needs so much that there has been a change in what people seek and expect to achieve when they attend university or when they receive of education of any kind. However, it is not yet clear how much continuity will be exhibited and in which direction our relationship with technology will evolve. Due to technological and social changes together with digitization, reading is becoming more intermittent and fragmented, and long-form reading is in decline. Engagement with various types of literature and written text has been seen as providing both information and intellectual exercise for all of the faculties including those of reasoning, memory, analysis, and comparison. In contrast what comes to our attention online especially on mobile platforms is more likely to have been chosen for us by algorithms on the basis of our own previously expressed preferences, whether that expression was given consciously or not. Overwhelmingly the material is of a current, personalised, immediate and usually directly informative or entertaining nature. The algorithm's processes are opaque and we cannot be sure as to whether they align with our values rather than our tastes.

The changes in 'reading' have revolutionized our education. Universities among other institutions are affected by the conditions in their surrounding societies, and indeed they are not remaining untouched by the wave of technological developments in the digital area. The motivations for the incorporation of many of these inventions and innovations can be described as not purely pedagogic. Factors taken into consideration include those of efficiency, finance, administration, and appearance. E-learning is now well established and seen as integral to the educational experience. M-learning (mobile learning) is now in the course of becoming part of the curriculum. In M-learning undergraduates are enabled and encouraged to use tablets and smart phones to participate in their courses. The author analyzes the consequences of the new technology that has already fundamentally changed the ways that younger generations 'read' and 'think' and how especially the emotional,

attentional and cognitive dimensions of ‘reading’ have changed. There seems to be no way back to the old world. In short, it is time to wake up and realize that there are huge consequences for educational policies and academic teaching – as well as for life in general.

Finally, Fakhri Issaoui and Mohamed Abdelghaffar in their article ‘Institutionalizing inclusive markets as a prerequisite to inclusive growth. By questioning the exclusionary effect of the neo-liberal informed Structural Adjustment Programs, the authors advocate inclusive growth in the market with an aim to achieve two main objectives: stabilization and liberalization. In the late 1980s, Africa was undergoing such adjustment programs. However, these SAPs often failed to achieve their expected goals, in particular in those African countries with less developed economies. In order to find alternatives, the authors emphasize the inclusiveness of social actors (including individuals, companies, government, civil society, etc.) in the growth process. More important, such inclusive drive has to be institutionalized.

African states, as well as the African Union, have embraced the ideals of inclusive growth. The authors point out that while the center favors a positive conclusion on the institutionalization of inclusive markets, this does not prevent the Africans from stressing that the incentives for the various actors to adopt the concept of inclusive growth remain insufficient. Political and legal efforts should be made to provide an enabling environment for inclusive growth, such as democratic reforms, peace and security, health and education reforms, which reflect the non-monetary dimensions of inclusive growth and to which all actors (led by governments) should contribute. Moreover, in such countries as Tunisia the present policies and legislation are at odds with the very concept of inclusive growth. This article demonstrates how important role the institutions play in achieving successful inclusive markets. However, despite this importance, Africa has not yet been able to build real institutions able to promote inclusive markets, which risks falling behind the objectives it has set itself. The article provides both theoretical discussion on economic theory as well as valuable information about policy-formation and politics in Africa, especially Tunisia.

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