

Health as a Common Good?

Health is often framed as a universal right, yet global access to healthcare remains deeply stratified. While many national governments and international health organisations continue to profess a commitment to universal health care, structural inequities in health insurance systems and availabilities of health care are often concealed through individualized understandings of health and well-being, making health care ultimately appear to be a personal issue. The shortcomings of individualized human-centered approaches to health care have also become apparent in recent scholarship on planetary health, as well as through the critiques of communities affected by climate change and extractivism.

Building on these critiques of contemporary health (care) disparities, this panel interrogates whether health can, or should, be considered a common good, and the implications of this framing for accessibility, inequality, and governance over life and death. We invite contributions which explore examples and potentials of commoning health, as well as the social, economic, and political dimensions of making health and well-being a common endeavour.

Key topics include the political economy of healthcare, examining how different systems—from universal healthcare to privatized markets—impact health equity and access. We will also invite reflections on the structural inequalities that negatively affect certain populations well-being and access to healthcare as well as marginalized communal approaches to health care. Ultimately, this panel seeks to foster critical engagement with the future of health and healthcare systems, encouraging participants to rethink the boundaries of what constitutes the “common” in health.

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