

Financial crisis and austerity measures in Greece: Their impact on health promotion policies and public health care

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Abstract

This review study explores the available data relating to the impact of financial crisis and subsequently applied austerity measures on the health care, social services and health promotion policies in Greece.

It is evident that Greece is affected more than any other European country by the financial crisis. Unemployment, job insecurity, income reduction, poverty and increase of mental disorders are among the most serious consequences of crisis in the socioeconomic life. The health system is particularly affected by the severe austerity measures. The drastic curtailing of government spending has significantly affected the structure and functioning of public hospitals that cope with understaffing, deficits, drug shortage and basic medical supplies. Moreover, health promotion policies are constrained, inhibiting thus the relevant initiatives toward disease prevention and health promotion education practices.

Overall, the current economic situation in Greece and its impact on real life and health care is quite concerning. Policy makers should not disregard the implications that austerity and fiscal policies have on the health sector. Greater attention is needed in order to ensure that individuals would continue getting public health care and having access to preventive and social support services. To face the economic hardship, policy makers are expected to implement human-centered approaches, safeguarding the human dignity and the moral values.

Keywords:

Financial crisis, Austerity, Recession, Health care, Social services, Greece