

## **Health Targets as an Instrument for Improving the Rational Framework of Healthcare Decisions**

*Chantal T. Dorange, Muriel Haim-Nemerson*

Merck & Co., Inc. Whitehouse Station, NJ, USA

There is currently a trend gaining acceptance that explicitly recognizes the need to set priorities for making rational decisions in health policy, respecting at the same time the underlying purpose of health care – to improve people’s health. This trend in health policy is referred to as “health targets” although definitions vary considerably. Having been initiated by the World Health Organization in the late 1970s, the international policy on health targets is in the process of renewal to become Health for All in the Twenty-First Century. The new program highlights 10 global targets, from the reduction of worldwide burden of diseases to improvement of access to comprehensive, essential quality care. Countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia have adopted and implemented such programs which basically include cardiovascular, cancer, accidents, and mental health targets. For many countries, however, there are several difficulties in establishing similar programs. One of them is the unavailability of reliable data, although political factors and structure of health systems also play a key role in the creation of health targets. Overall, health targets appear to be a key element in building a strong public health policy, taking into consideration not only the cost of healthcare, but also the outcomes in improving health which is the ultimate goal of health care systems.

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