

POPH90206 Health Policy

ASSIGNMENT 2: SERVICE ELIGIBILITY AND ACCESS INEQUITIES

Assignment 2: 60% of your mark for the subject

Due: Wednesday 11 June, 11.59pm

Word count: 3000 words (allow +/- 10%)

Background

The goal of this assignment is to produce a 3000-word document that reviews inequities in access to / eligibility for a government service or intervention.

Assignment 1 focussed on who influences health policy.

This assignment, however, focuses on how some groups in society experience inequities in access to / eligibility for a service or public health intervention.

Health equity, and inequity reduction, is a key public health goal. However, policy decisions and health interventions can lead to worsening health inequities.

For example, there is no doubt that tobacco control has led to improved population health but also led to widening health inequities – everyone does not benefit equally from tobacco control interventions. And one reason could be some services / interventions are inaccessible for disadvantaged groups.

The goal of this assignment is for you to demonstrate your ability to think through who is missing out when policy decisions are made. It could be by design – certain groups are deliberately excluded by government. Or it could be a result of social disadvantage leading to systematic and structural exclusion.

After reading your article, the marker should have a clear idea of:

- The service / intervention of interest and a clear account of the population it is designed to impact (e.g. is it targeted or universal?)
- The literature regarding the barriers population groups face when trying to access government services / interventions
- The key barriers to accessing / eligibility for the service or intervention mapped against the theoretical target population
- One priority action to fix the access / eligibility inequity identified.

Initial Preparation

In week 1 please do the following:

- Identify a government service or intervention that you can argue has / could have an impact on health. The service or intervention can be from Australia or any other country

- Identify the population it is targeted to impact

Please note, examples are at the end of this document, to help kick off your search for a service / intervention to focus on. You can use these examples or pick one of your own. Either is fine.

I will be running Zoom drop-in sessions to help you with this initial prep.

The assignment should include the following sections:

1. Your chosen service / intervention and the target population (approx. 500 words)

Like in assignment 1, succinctly describe your chosen service / intervention and its stated goal. And clearly identify the link to health of your chosen service or intervention.

Clearly outline the target population for your chosen service / intervention (is it universal, or is it targeted).

You must use citations when you identify your chosen service / intervention, its link to health, and the target population.

2. A mini-literature review of the barriers population groups face when trying to access government services. The literature can be a mix of theory and evidence on inequities in access and eligibility (approx. 1000 words)

Having outlined the target population for your chosen service or intervention, zoom out and reflect on the key barriers likely to impact the service / intervention target population.

For example, this could relate to geographic distance, gender bias, social exclusion, gaps in eligibility in policy design, eligibility cut offs.

Make sure this section cites either the theoretical literature on social disadvantage and its impact on access, or empirical evidence (qual or quant) that documents inequities in access to government services or interventions (or a mix of both theory and empirical evidence).

3. A structured analysis of the barriers the target population for the service / intervention are likely to face. (approx. 1000 words)

Now its time to zoom in. Building on your review of the literature, provide a structured analysis of the access / eligibility barriers specific groups within the target population are likely to face.

The following questions may help you:

- Who is eligible? How is this determined? Could this lead to inequitable access?

- Is the eligible group the only group who would benefit from the service / intervention? Are people being deliberately excluded who could benefit from the service / intervention?
- Even if you are eligible, are there reasons why certain groups might not be able to access your chosen service / intervention?
- Is there an eligibility cut off – could this lead to unintended consequences, such as people being discouraged to access the service / intervention?

This section is your opportunity to demonstrate your critical thinking! Go for it!

4. One priority action to close access / eligibility inequities (approx. 500 words)

Finally, in brief, given what you have found in sections 2 and 3, recommend one priority action area to help close inequities in access to the service / intervention.

This final section is your opportunity to write for a policy audience! Be concise!

Example services and interventions

To kick off your thinking about which services or interventions you want to focus on, here are some examples.

- 1) Australia's National Disability Insurance Scheme
- 2) Australia's Disability Support Pension
- 3) UK's Winter Fuel Allowance
- 4) Indonesia's Free Meal Programme
- 5) Medicaid in the USA
- 6) Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration's approval to amend restrictions on the prescribing of MS-2 Step: Medical Abortion
- 7) 2024 Victorian Government's introduction of minimum standards for rental properties (tutorial topic)
- 8) India's eSanjeevani, National Telemedicine Service
- 9) Housing First – an intervention to end homelessness, adopted in a range of cities internationally
- 10) Minimum Income Guarantee in Scotland
- 11) Childcare subsidy Australia