

HEALTH TARGETS - A TOOL TO DEVELOP HEALTH STRATEGIES?

Forum IV dealt with the evaluation of concepts, methods and strategies of European programmes, that are concerned with health, the potentials, the limitations and their practicability were discussed.

Prof. Dr. Schwartz (University of Hannover) remarked, that controlling health systems is unthinkable without targets, as much as the measuring of quality in the health sector is. A positive example is the result-oriented aim of the WHO, that still designates the possibly best health of a population with the least differences for the various groups as their main interest.

Under-Secretary of State Dr. Andrzej Rys informed about the recently reformed health system in Poland, and the problems that occurred with the change from a socialistic to a capitalistic system and partly still occur. Since the start of the national health programme the targets are supervised by the Ministry of Health, which sends annual reports to the parliament. Poland took European health system as a role- model for their new one and has abstracted the most adequate ones for the situation in the country.

Dr. Anna Ritsatakis (social scientist, WHO) warned to step backwards and to come to mono-central decisions, which means that only doctors are involved in the process. Health targets cannot exclusively be formulated by health experts. A positive example is Great Britain, where 23 Ministers signed the health targets.

Dr. Joan Colom Farran (Ministry of Health, Catalonia) reported about the experiences with health targets concerning alcohol problems. The aims are: prevention, early diagnosis, the control of alcoholism and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

Prof. Morton Warner (social scientist) reported about methodological implications and the experience of the WHO network. Within the Health for Everybody (now Health 21) programme many European members of Regional Health Networks (RHN) took part in the definition of health targets. The occurring methodological problems should not be seen as separable from political contexts and the professional pressure, that results from the distribution of resources.

Dr. Mathias Wismar (University of Hannover) summarised the results of an international analysis on health programmes. The striking differences between the theory of health target programmes and the practical performance on national, regional and local levels are remarkable. Most noticeable are the differences concerning target regions, specification and intended purpose. Apart from that, most health target programmes fail, when it comes to realisation.

In the future it will be essential, that targets are not defined in isolated expert groups , but include all actors in the health sector and the citizens