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UITNODIGING

Voor de openbare verdediging van het
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U wordt vriendelijk uitgenodigd op de openbare verdediging van het proefschrift van

Por IR

'Using targeted subsidies to improve access to health care for the poor in low-income countries: lessons from Cambodia 2000-2009'

Op **woensdag 29 juni 2011** om **17 uur** in auditorium **P. Brouwer** van de Faculteit Geneeskunde & Farmacie Laarbeeklaan 103, 1090 Brussel

Situering van het proefschrift

Ensuring universal access to health care without incurring catastrophic financial consequences – universal coverage – is a fundamental goal of many health systems and policies, in developed and developing countries alike. Cambodia is no exception. However, access to affordable and effective health care remains a major problem for poor people in Cambodia as public funding for health services is insufficient and social health insurance is underdeveloped. In recent years, targeted subsidy mechanisms such as health equity funds and vouchers have increasingly been used to overcome barriers for the poor to accessing health care. Knowledge on their impact and other crucial issues related to targeted subsidies remains fairly limited though. This dissertation tries to address this gap, based on more than ten years of field experience, a thorough literature review and studies conducted on health equity funds and vouchers. The findings demonstrate the important role of these targeted subsidy mechanisms in improving access to health care for the poor in resource-poor settings like Cambodia. The findings also shed light on some of the conditions that need to be in place for implementing targeted subsidies and on issues that are often overlooked in this debate: the identification of the poor, a better understanding of the major health problems affecting the poor, and the successful translation of knowledge from a pilot into health policy.

Curriculum Vitae

Por Ir was born on 8 October 1971 in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. After the end of the Khmer Rouge genocidal regime in 1979, he started his education. He obtained his Medical Degree in 1996 at the University of Health Science in Phnom Penh. From 1997 to 1999, he worked for the Ministry of Health in Siem Reap on quality improvement programmes. Later, he was seconded to work temporarily with Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in Cambodia on various disease control and health system strengthening projects, including Health Equity Funds. In 2004 he obtained his MPH degree at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp. He then joined the Belgian Technical Cooperation to implement a health project to expand health equity funds and other health district development strategies introduced by MSF in three provinces in Cambodia. In 2006 he started his PhD activities as a 'Sandwich' PhD student at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp. To date, he published 12 papers in PUBMED, including one article and two correspondence letters in the Lancet, and several others as book chapters and working papers.