

### Charalampos Economou

#### *Barriers and Facilitating Factors in Access to Health Services in Greece*

*World Health Organization, Regional office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2015*

**T**his extensive Paper of 174 pages, fills a significant gap in the international literature, regarding barriers and facilitating factors in access to services of vulnerable groups in Greece.

In its five chapters, apart from the relation of the results obtained by the qualitative research, is being made an extensive reference on the situation in the field of health in Greece the last years and also passes judgment in relevant surveys. The new elements that convey to the scientific community are a thorough analysis of the obstacles facing the Greek population in its access to health services, demonstrable by economic and statistical data, as well as the outcome of the joint research.

The report is structured in two parts. On the first takes place the desk review, which analyzes the findings of prior surveys and of relevant works, by category (Availability, Accessibility? Efficiency). On the second, which is the research part of the report, are presented the results of the qualitative research. Mr. Economou's study concludes that the reforms in the healthcare sector over the last five years are, mainly, financially orientated. However, this practice ignores the citizen-patient as an entity and focuses on management issues. According to the author, the only way that success is achieved in the Greek healthcare system is through the provision of high quality services in a fair and free context, while the State itself should intent to serve the patients and not sparing resources through financial reductions.

In fact, this study, like other recent studies, highlights the problems that the citizens confront when they seek for health care within the European Union. At the same time, constitutes a spark for further investigation on the context of how to overcome the problems found in this survey. The fact that this research is not simply limited to a short period of time but examines in depth of thirty years (through the desk review), gives the opportunity for comparison with the past and exportation of safer conclusions on the possible changes that arise. The present study, using quantitative methodological tools, contributes to the depiction of the general trends that exist in the healthcare sector in Greece today. However, the emergence of problems through qualitative methods is crucial in order to understand the social context of healthcare today and how realistic problems affect people's lives, especially in times of crises.

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