Health, Development and Globalization

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Objectives: To identify how Brazil has been addressed in the concepts of development and globalization from the perspective of health policy and to describe their relationship to regional and foreign economic policy and the challenges arising from it.

Methodology: Descriptive analytical.

Results: The authors report two principles underlying the proper relationship between health and development: 1) strengthening human development with equity and social justice and 2) the efficient development of productive medical complexes. As their first discovery, they find that development, in reality, worsens the integration of poorer regions because of the unequal international distribution of resources.

In support of its argument, the authors present the approach of Latin American development and its linkages with health made succinctly by liberalism, Marxism and development theory. Two achievements stand out from the light of these approaches: a) greater access to education, health, water and healing the earth b) increased economic investment, innovation and government intervention in the health sector.

Next, the authors describe two policies of the health care system in Brazil that are associated with capitalist production: health and pensions. The first regulates sanitation and vaccination campaigns, while the second provides social benefits. In this context, the authors mention two events that result from the modification of the historical relationship between development and health in Brazil: a) the creation of privileges for the dominant groups from the coup in 1964, and b) the reformulation of the health system, which establishes the universal and equal right to health care, integral to health since 1988. Despite this latest twist, sustainable development in the health sector is still insufficient.

The authors also highlight five problems in the current context of the Brazilian health sector: 1) the prevalence of infectious, parasitic and chronic degenerative diseases, 2) the increase in violence, 3) decentralization of the Single Health System, 4) the joining of health promotion, disease prevention and recovery in health care, and 5) the lack of coordination within and between segments of the productive complex and health.

Finally, the authors identified two challenges for health and development in the context of globalization: a) obtaining a sovereign and sustainable development that obeys the growth of social justice and appropriate management of the environment and b) integration of a South American regional project to increase the effectiveness of innovations in developing countries.

Conclusions: The authors conclude that the current relationship between health and economic development tends to favor market dynamics. For authors, the main challenge in this respect is to integrate national and international action to generate in each country and the region a sovereign and sustainable health policy.