

# Why Primary Health Care Offers a more Comprehensive Approach to Tackling Health Inequities than Primary Care

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*As governments attempt to focus more intently on how to deal with alarming measures of health disadvantage and inequities, a reformist gaze seems to have settled on the primary care sector. Simultaneously, in literature about this area — whether intended or not — primary health care and primary care are terms that are increasingly interchanged. This article argues that the slippage in language is counter-productive, first because it disguises the transformative potential of strategies and approaches that can make the fundamental changes necessary to improve health status, and second because the structures and practices of the primary care sector are not necessarily compatible with notions of comprehensive primary health care. There is much to be lost if primary health care and health promotion are disguised as primary care and not understood for their capacity to make a difference to health inequities, although of course in some circumstances comprehensive primary health care is interdependent with services provided by primary care. In this article, characteristics of primary care and primary health care are juxtaposed to show that if the strengths and limitations of each model are understood, they can be mobilised in collaborative partnerships to deal more effectively with health inequities than our system has so far been able to do.*