

Achievements, challenges and threats to the Brazilian universal health system

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Achievements in the 90's

- Constitution (1988) defines health as human right
 - It creates the Unified Health System (SUS)
- In practice, the SUS:
 - Increases vaccination coverage and prenatal and childbirth care,
 - Universalizes oral rehydration
 - Implements the Community Health Agents and the Family Health Programs
 - Implements Emergence Care Program and pharmaceutical assistance
 - Strengthens the health surveillance system
- As results, the SUS:
 - Reduces the incidence of diseases susceptible to prevent by vaccines
 - Reduces infant mortality
 - Increases population life expectance.

Achievements in the 90's

- Inflation control
- Decentralization
 - Municipalities
- Social participation
 - Health councils

Challenges

- Some communicable diseases continue with high prevalence
- Non-communicable diseases increase their prevalence
- New problems, as dengue and Zika, emerge
- Violence grows significantly
- Inequities persist

Achievements in the 2000's

- Economic growth and income distribution
- Public health services expansion
 - Mental health care
 - Oral health care

Economic crisis

- In 2011, global economic crisis strongly affects the country
 - The GDP, which grew 4.5% a year, on average, between 2004 and 2011, falls to a retraction of 3.8% in 2015
 - Unemployment rises from 6.5% in December 2014 to 12% in December 2016.
- Measures taken by Roussef government are ineffective
- Mass demonstrations erupt, popular support for Roussef government falls quickly

Political crisis

- The combination of economic and political crisis strengthens the opposition
 - The National Congress approves Rouseff's impeachment
- The vice-president Temer takes office as the new president and adopts a new political program based on what is called "fiscal austerity"
 - Temer makes explicit his central goal: to ensure the primary surplus in public accounts so as not to compromise the public debt service that represents 45% of the federal budget.

“Austerity” measures

- A constitutional amendment establishes the inflation index of the previous year as the annual ceiling for the growth of government spending for the next 20 years.
- Estimates of the impact of this amendment indicate that:
 - Federal health spending, in 2036, will represent 1.2% of GDP against the current 1.7%
 - In per capita terms, spending will be fixed at US\$ 156 for 20 years.

Threats

- There are good evidence that the so-called austerity policies generate job loss, increased unemployment and impoverishment
- These conditions compromise mental health, with increased incidence of stress and alcohol abuse,
- The number of suicide cases increases,
- The prevalence of chronic as well as infectious diseases, particularly in vulnerable populations, gets higher.

Threats to health

- Given that a large part of the Brazilian population lives in a situation of social vulnerability
 - – there are, at least, 14 million families whose income does not exceed US\$ 57 per capita per month –
- a real health tragedy may occur, if the government can implement the newly approved austerity measures.

Threats to democracy

- In 2014, the then candidate of opposition to the presidency of the Republic proposed this fiscal austerity policy and was defeated.
- Temer, thus, begins his government under a double illegitimacy:
 - based on a process of impeachment, without a proof of crime of responsibility by President Roussef, and
 - adopting an economic policy rejected by the voters.

Democracy and social rights

- An attack on the democratic regime accompanies the disrespect for social rights.
 - Labor reform
 - Social Security reform
- The approval of the constitutional amendment that freezes social spending deepens this attack,
 - since it violates the Constitution's non-modifiable clauses, such as the right to health and education.

What is coming next?

- The question that arises is, then:
 - How do the current coalition in power think of sustaining itself politically, considering its double illegitimacy?
 - Will they try to stop the general elections of 2018?
 - Wounded their social rights, the Brazilians will lose their political rights and democratic freedoms?

• **THANK YOU!**

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