Turning the World Upside Down
the search for global health in the 21st century

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Health delivery systems

A systems approach

An analysis which looks at:
- The dominant model derived from western scientific medicine
- The ideas developing in poorer countries
- The critique from within
- Some principles essential to health systems
Western Scientific Medicine

The last century was dominated by the interaction of greater professionalism, scientific discovery, commercial development and spending growth, increasingly from governments. These factors have helped create systems which revolve around professionals, hospitals and measurable transactions ... which are designed to promote health and combat disease ... and which have been astonishingly successful.
But ... 

These systems were created to tackle one set of problems; but today diseases and patients are changing and we require different solutions - more obviously linked to society, behaviour and culture - and patients both want and need to have more control.

We can see this in expenditure patterns - where the highest cost patients now have long term conditions - in patient feedback and in how these systems fail in delivery and financially.
I will argue that

The basic tenets of western scientific medicine remain invaluable but that they are no longer sufficient by themselves and need to be transformed to deal with the problems and environment of the 21st Century.
Ideas and developments in poorer countries

Health problems in poorer countries (and richer ones) are complicated by poverty and social issues.

Whilst the benefits of science and professionalism are needed, lack of both money and “baggage” can help breed innovation with a concentration on using the resources available – of all kinds.
This is seen in practice with

- Social enterprises – using business methods to social goals – and building on the strengths of community and family
- Training for the job and not just the profession
- Public health linked to clinical medicine
- Openness to technology
- Emphasis on the goal of independence, not just health, to live a life they have reason to value
The internal critique

The critique of costs, poor quality, waste and inefficiency is well known

Promising developments include:

– “Early health” approaches, utilising science
– Technological breakthroughs linked to new business models
– Systems based quality improvement

“Triple Aim” offers system wide change by simultaneously pursuing individual care, population health and cost control
Some principles for health delivery systems

• Understand the full range of options
• Be clear about purpose – narrower health or wider independence
• Embed delivery systems in society and culture
• Shape the development of the WHO’s 6 system building elements
• Train for the job, not just the profession
• Systems are dynamic so build in clear methodologies for implementation and improvement
Turning the world upside down

This is not just about emerging markets, the analysis applies to all health systems.

Rich and poor have much to learn and much to teach.

The sting in the tale - Norway