

Exploring Health Inequalities and Indigenous Healthcare from The Perspective of The Right to Health

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Abstract: The right to health is considered as a fundamental human right and a universal value, but the issues of health inequalities are widely recognized globally. While the world is constantly facing the health crisis associated with changing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) celebrated World Health Day on April 7th, 2021 and called for action to work together to reach a fairer and healthier world by using health inequalities related concepts as its campaign theme. This article mainly uses relevant government policies and statistics information, together with extensive literature review to explore Taiwan's recent efforts to reduce health gaps and eliminate health inequalities and the achievements after strengthening health care for indigenous population from the perspective of the right to health. Advanced countries such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia have specific health related policies and indicators for their indigenous populations, yet indigenous peoples are still affected by significant health disparities. An example from Australia's statistics in 2015 to 2017 showed that the life expectancy was 83.4 years for non-indigenous females and 75.6 years for indigenous females, and 80.2 years for non-indigenous males and 71.6 for indigenous males. According to Taiwan's statistics in 2019, it showed that life expectancy for non-indigenous versus indigenous populations was founded to be 84.2 years versus 77.5 years for females, and 77.7 years versus 68.7 years for males, respectively. The gap of life expectancy was between 6.7 and 9 years. It is suggested that in addition to monitoring health indicators, culturally meaningful community participation should also be strengthened so that the health of indigenous peoples can be conscious and then self-determined through personal empowerment.

Keywords: the right to health, health inequalities, indigenous healthcare, community participation, cultural aspects