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Designing the perfect primary health care system - comparing international primary health care systems to decrease health inequalities

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Background and Aim: Family physicians operate in primary health care systems that are organized in various ways in different countries. Using the device of asking participants to imagine the ideal Primary Health Care system, this workshop focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of different primary health care systems and encourages the participants to identify the features including structures, and policy settings of successful systems, especially from the perspective of decreasing inequalities in health.

Method: The workshop has three parts: first, the conveners will briefly present examples of primary health care systems. Participants will be provided with material identifying the key indicators of primary health care systems from a range of countries, and summaries of their strengths and weaknesses. The second part of the workshop comprises small group discussions, identifying the best features of different systems drawing on the evidence and participants' own experience. The groups will be presented with the following proposition: "You have the opportunity to participate in the planning and development of a Primary Health Care system in a country which has virtually no Primary Care in place, and in which General Practice is rudimentary or non-existent. With a particular emphasis on issues of equity, what would your recommended system look like?" The third part of the workshop the ideas of the participants will be gathered together to form conclusions of key strategies for primary health care systems improvement and equitable provision of health care to the population.

Goals/Results: The workshop aims at sharing and increasing participants' knowledge of different primary health care systems and will improve their skills at critically appraising the systems.

Conclusions: The workshop will conclude with ideas on how to improve primary health care systems to decrease inequalities in health. The participants interested in elaborating these ideas further will be invited to co-author an evaluation paper of primary health care systems.

