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Letters Tackling health inequality

Let's ask them to curb choice

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We have seen some paradigm shifts in managing health inequalities¹ in the past decade, which coincided with the Labour government taking power in 1997. However, the recent publication of England's health profile still shows marked inequalities in health between the north and south in England.² Despite the government's commitment to public health, financial resources that were earmarked for Choosing Health initiatives went into balancing primary care trusts' budgets. This is in parallel with unprecedented financial and political investments in the "choice" agenda despite evidence from a major national research programme funded by the Department of Health that it merely maintains the inequality divide and does nothing to address quality of health services and health outcomes.³ In fact, when it comes to "choice," less is more.⁴

It is about time that we challenged politicians on the shameful waste of resources on initiatives of dubious value such as Choose and Book and walk-in centres, which increase health inequalities even further, as the well informed and middle classes seem to benefit the most.

Footnotes

- Competing interests: None declared.

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