

Equitable approach the best way to rapidly increase overall maternal and child health coverage

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The first ever global study to examine how changes in health inequality are related to overall coverage of maternal and child health interventions has shown that the countries making the most rapid progress in increasing maternal and child health coverage are those with programmes which most effectively address the needs of the poorest women and children in a population.

All interventions are likely to reach people who are better-off. However, in countries where [maternal and child health](#) interventions have been promoted for several years, increases in coverage are generally associated with reduced inequalities. Countries making the fastest progress in increasing health coverage were those which prioritised the poorest groups.

According to lead author Professor Cesar Victora, of Universidade Federal de Pelotas in Brazil, "[There are concerns that] the present focus on overall progress in coverage and [health status](#) might contribute to increasing [health] inequalities. Our analyses confirm the importance of taking equity into account when assessing overall progress in coverage at country level."

Provided by Lancet

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