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Financial Morbidity of Cancer Care: Ethics of Access

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The Key Question

Is access to care an ethical issue?

Issues of Justice

- **Access**
  - Whether people who are – or who should be - entitled to health care services receive them
  - Opportunity to:
    - Identify health care needs
    - Seek health care services
    - Reach or obtain or use health care services
    - Have the need for services fulfilled

Emanuel, Hastings Center Report, 2000

Issues of Justice

- **Allocation**
  - Process used to determine which resources will be distributed within a population and for individuals
    -
    - Point of service level
    - Individual patient level

Emanuel, Hastings Center Report, 2000

Why Access is Important

- Health Outcomes
  - Overall physical and psychological health
  - Disease prevention and limits disability
- Quality of life
- Premature mortality
- Overall survival

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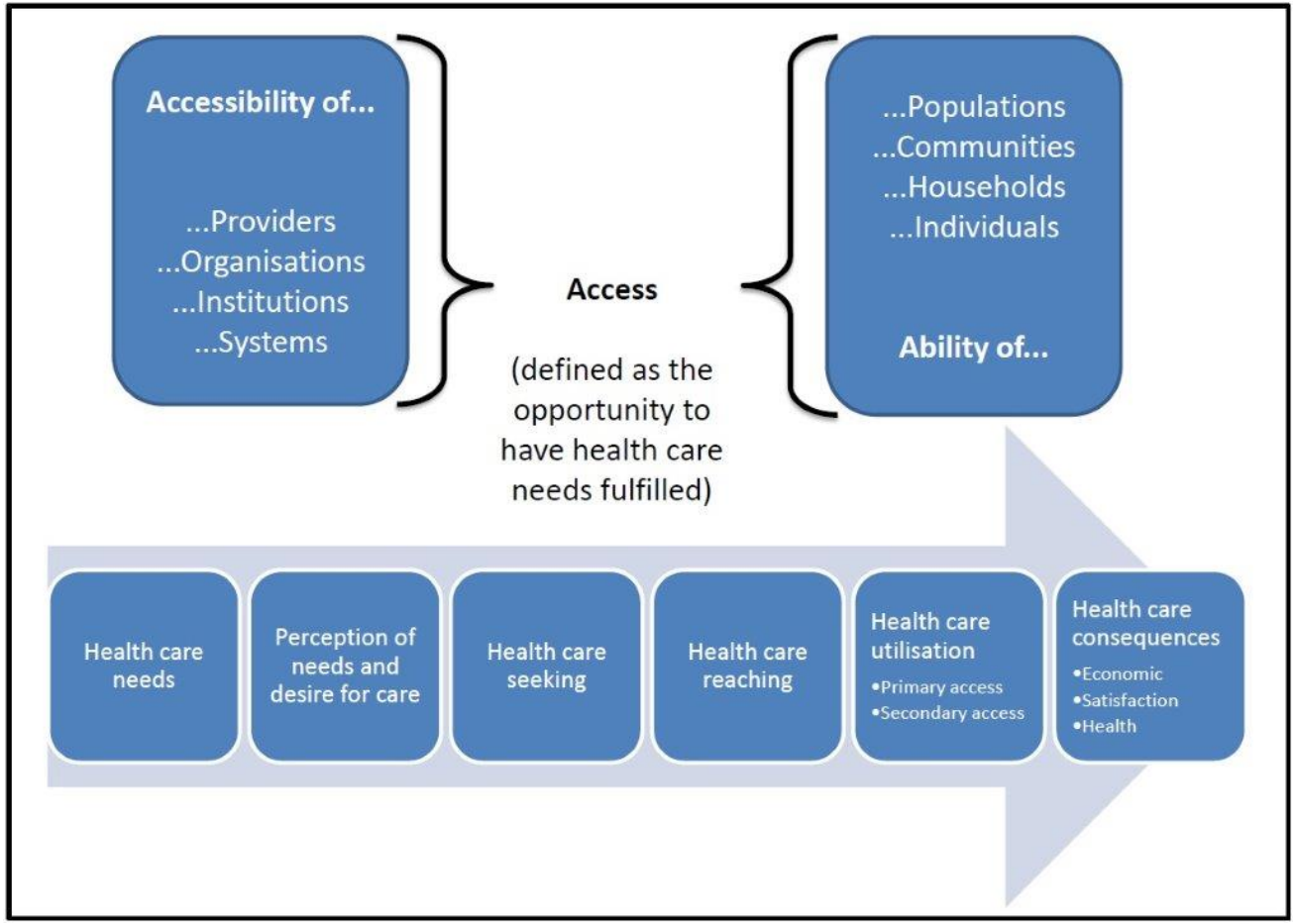

Levesque et al J Equity Health, 2013

Dimensions of Access

- Approachability
- Acceptability
- Availability
- Affordability
- Appropriateness

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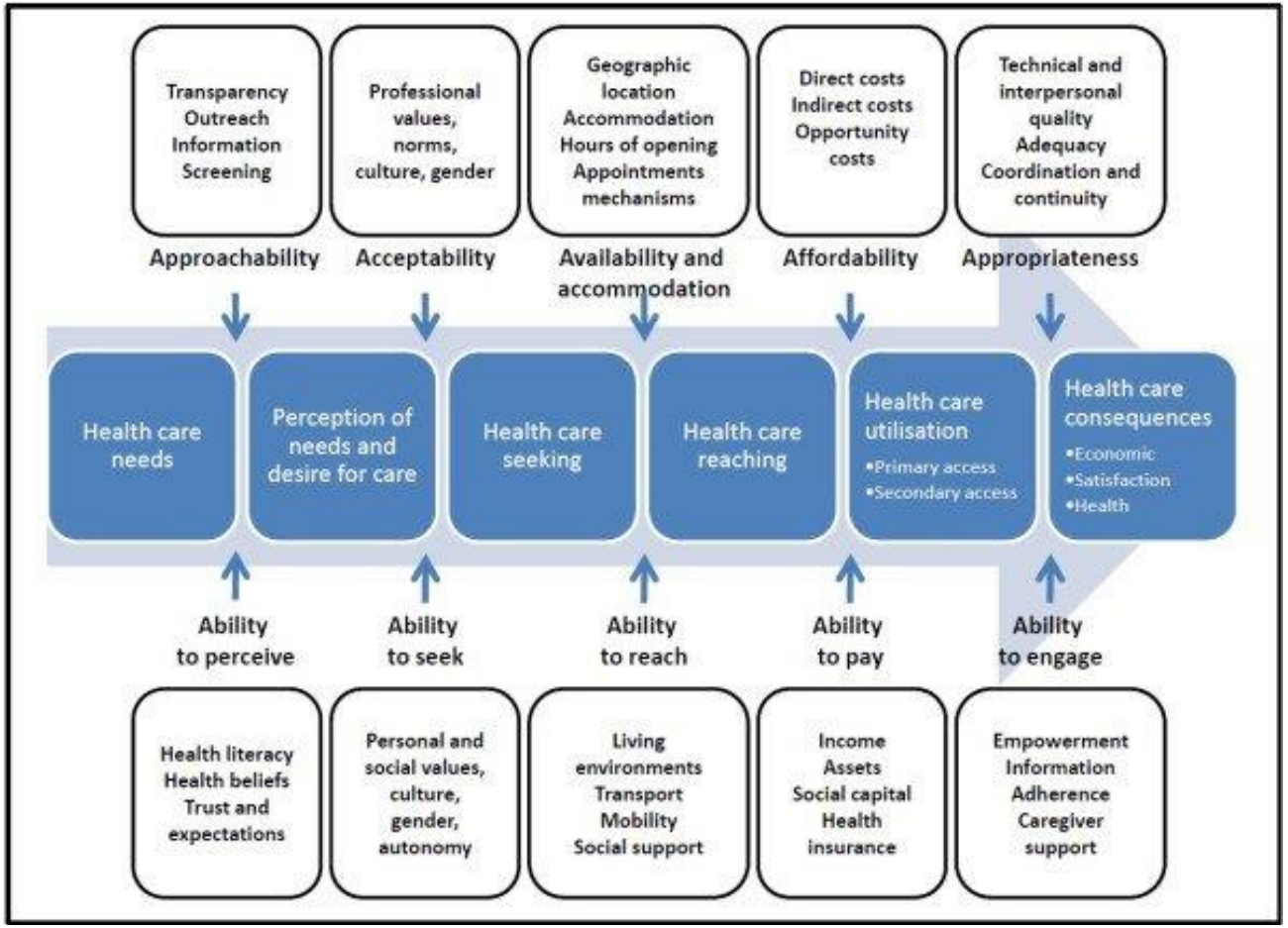
Population Facilitators

- Ability to perceive
  - Knowledge
  - Information
- Ability to seek
- Ability to reach
- Ability to pay
- Ability to engage



Levesque et al J Equity Health, 2013

Barriers to Care and Services

- **Ecological obstacles**
  - Location of the sources of health care
    - Distances and travel time
- **Organizational obstacles**
  - Modes of organization
    - Delays in obtaining appointments
    - Delays in receiving care

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Barriers to Care and Services

- **Financial obstacles**
  - Cost of services
  - Prices charged by providers
- **Personal costs**
  - Time away from work
  - Out of pocket expenses
  - Child care

Barriers to Care and Services

Influential Factors

- Poverty and deprivation
- Language deficits
- Race, culture and class
  - Social circumstances
- Education
- Employment status

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Responsible Allocation

- Acknowledgment of limited health care resources
- Increasing health care costs
  - Larger percent of GDP
    - Growing cancer population
    - Expanding need for services
  - Rising cost of innovation
    - Novel cancer therapies
    - New technology

Responsible Allocation

- Distributive Justice
  - Notion of equality
- Fair equality of opportunity
  - Services that are needed to maintain and/or restore loss of normal functioning

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Responsible Allocation

- Fair and transparent
- Public deliberations
- Equitable and consistent
- Sensitive to value
- Compassionate

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Access to Cancer Care

Equality of opportunity

Value of compassion