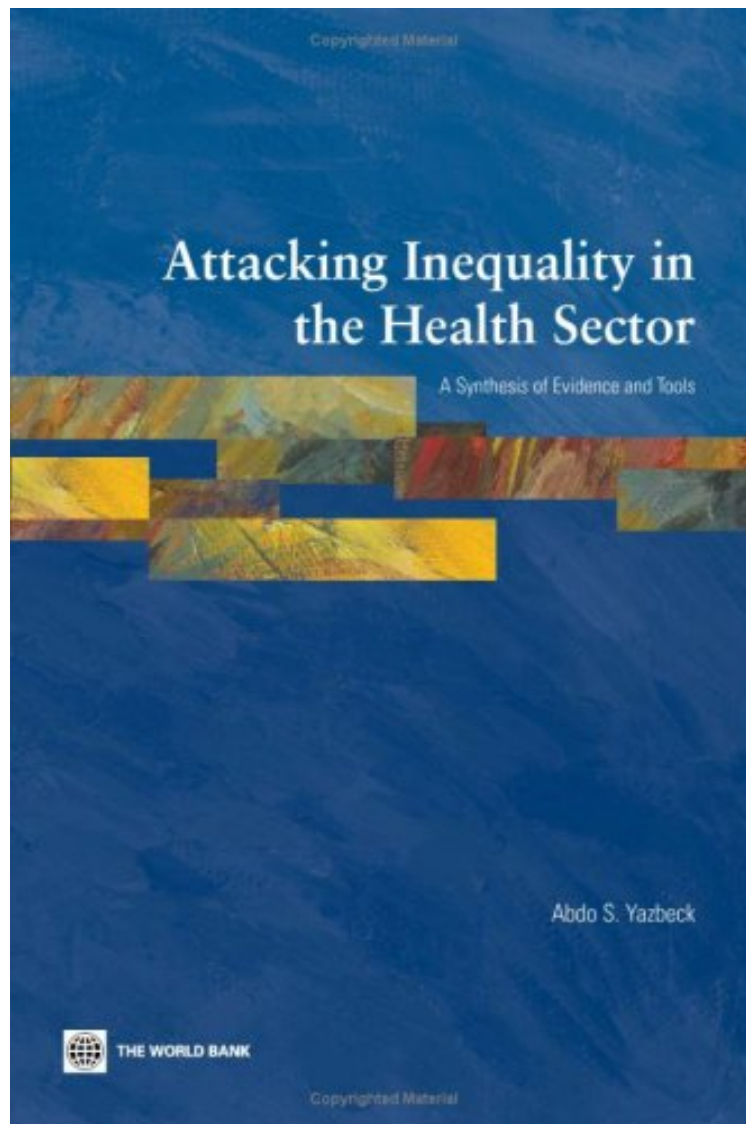


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Attacking Inequality in the Health Sector: A Synthesis of Evidence and Tools

Abdo S. Yazbeck

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A breakthrough in measuring inequalities in health has shattered myths about the effectiveness of health systems in helping the poor. The resulting evidence on outcome inequality is overwhelming. Children from poor families from over 50 low- and middle-income countries suffer malnutrition and die at much higher rates than children from better-off families. Fertility rates for poor women far outpace those of better-off women. The most jarring finding, however, is not that the poor suffer more, but that health systems, even when publicly financed, are much more likely to serve the better-off than the poor and, by doing so, increase inequalities in health, nutrition, and fertility outcomes. There is hope, though. In this ocean of inequality, islands of success exist and critical lessons can and should be learned from them. 'Attacking Inequality in the Health Sector' distills the operational knowledge relevant to attacking health sector inequality and uses available empirical evidence to answer two critical questions: Why is there persistent inequality in health care? What can be done about it? Using 14 evaluated, proven successes and an exhaustive literature review, this book serves as a practical 'how to' manual for defining, understanding, and effectively addressing the problems of inequality in health service use. It will be of particular interest to policy makers, advocates in civil society, and development agencies that are committed to improving health service use by the poor and socially vulnerable.