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Common Error No. 4 [1]

Written by **Dr Madsen Pirie** [2] | Tuesday 8 January 2008

4. "Rich people should not be able to buy better healthcare and education"

Rich people buy better versions of most things. They buy smarter cars, better houses, higher quality music systems and more expensive food and clothes. This is one reason why people want to earn more ? wealth brings better goods and services and more choices, too.

Some claim that education and health are different, and that we should all have the same quality, with no-one able to buy better. Few say this about other essentials such as food, or urge a state monopoly of food production, with no-one allowed to buy better than whatever standard supply the state was able to deliver.

When people are allowed to buy better things, more money enters the market, and what starts as a luxury for the rich gradually becomes affordable to most buyers. Today's common flat screen colour TVs were previously affordable only by the wealthy. In many markets product improvement and innovation start at the top end ? It is often where producers earn greater rewards ? and work downwards.

If people are allowed to buy better health and education, this brings more money into health and education. It also allows the state to divert the money it would have spent on meeting their needs toward those less able to provide for themselves, and to give them access to better services.

Some feel that equality of opportunity is fairer, but nature knows no such equality, equipping some people with more intelligence, better looks, or more caring parents. Similarly in health the accident of inheritance puts some at an advantage over others. What we can seek, rather than an unobtainable equality, is a society in which everyone has access to an education which can develop their potential, and a healthcare system which will provide essential treatment for those who need it.

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