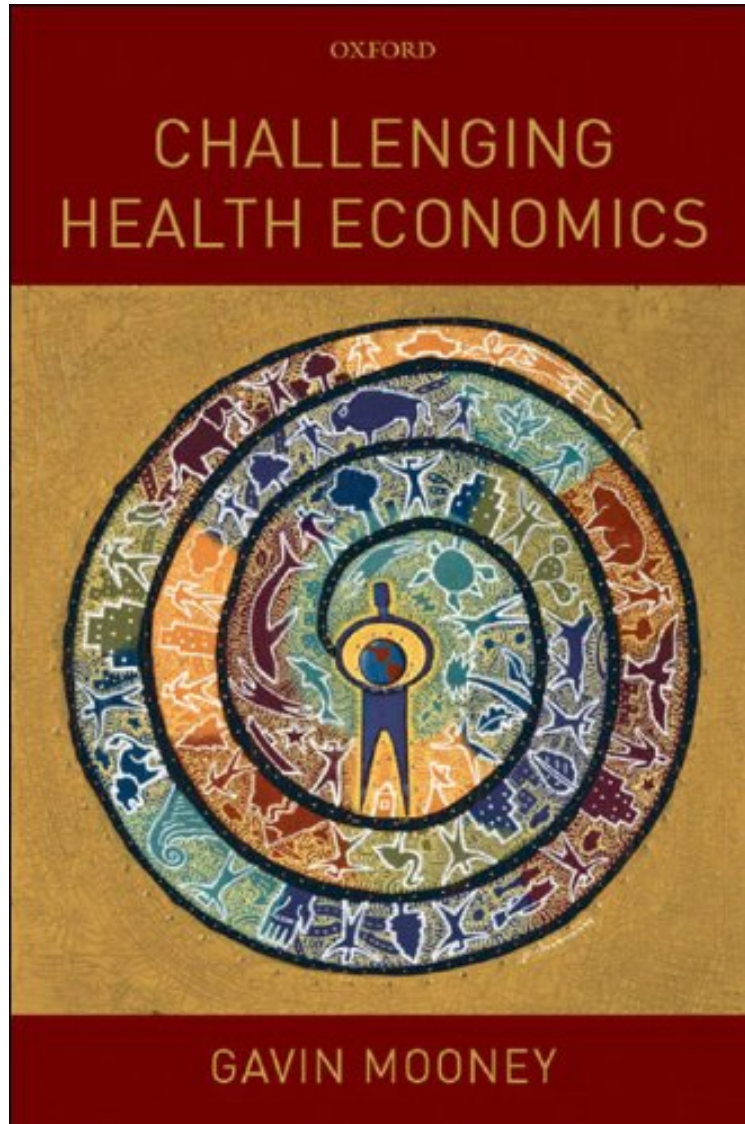


# Challenging Health Economics

Gavin Mooney

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**Gavin Mooney : Challenging Health Economics** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Challenging Health Economics:

This book mounts a critique of current health economics and provides a better way of looking at the economics of health and health care. It argues that health economics has been too dominated by the economics of health care and has largely ignored the impact of poverty, inequality, poor housing, and lack of education on health. It is suggested that some of the structural issues of economics, particularly the individualism of neo liberalism which is becoming more

and more pervasive across the globe, need to be addressed in health economics. The author instead proposes a form of collective decision making through communitarianism, placing value on participation in public life and on institutions, such as health care. It is envisaged this form of decision making can be used at the local, national or global levels. For the last, this would mean a major revamp of global institutions like the World Bank and the IMF. Examples of the impact of the new paradigm on health policy in general but also more specifically on priority setting and equity are included.

Mooney's deepest challenge is to those of us who have spent a professional lifetime struggling, like Keynes, to escape from habitual modes of thought and expression. He argues, in detail, that the traditional framework for understanding the consequences of choices among well-defined commodities by homogeneous, well-off individuals, still ramifies into every corner of our minds. There is yet far to go, to create a genuine economics of health but Mooney's book offers a direction.

\* Robert G Evans, Centre for Health Services and Policy Research, University of British Columbia

\* While others before him have poked holes in market-based theory as applied to health, Gavin Mooney is the first to provide a convincing alternative paradigm. In this book he writes convincingly and compassionately about how health economics can and should concern itself with improving the health and well-being of communities. His conclusion that a communitarian outlook can take into account the values of the citizenry in setting public priorities challenges us to formulate far more enlightened policy.

\* Thomas Rice, Professor and Vice Chancellor, University of California, Los Angeles

\* This is a much needed book in the rather conservative field of health economics. Most health economists have been based in the U.S. and, for the most part, have reproduced - consciously or unconsciously - the market ideology that dominates this area of academic work in the U.S. Writing in a clear and accessible way, leading health economist Gavin Mooney dismantles the "orthodoxy" that dominates the field, challenging each of the assumptions on which the market ideology promoted in orthodox health economics is based. It is a must-read for all courses in health economics.

\* Vincent Navarro, Professor of Health Policy, Johns Hopkins University, Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of Health Services

\* Any health economist wishing to make a meaningful contribution to health and health systems should read this book and take to heart its message of the urgent need to challenge the status quo. It is also essential reading for anyone committed to creating humane health systems, no matter what their disciplinary background. This book holds the promise of revolutionising the discipline of health economics.

\* Di McIntyre, Professor of Health Economics, University of Cape Town

\* Any health economist and health policy maker wishing to make a difference in health and health care will likely benefit from reading this book. It is also a must-read for those who are committed to forming a humane health system. It is an essential text for courses in health economics, priority setting and reform of health system, as well as health policy and management. Highly recommended.

\* Ya-Seng (Arthur) Hsueh, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health

\* About the Author Gavin Mooney is Professor of Health Economics at Curtin University in Perth, Australia. He is Director of the Social and Public Health Economics Research Group (SPHERE) and holds visiting positions at Aarhus University, Denmark and the University of Cape Town, South Africa.