

**Methods**

Data consisted of health policy documents and papers, strategic plans, goals and objectives published in the Web sites of the Ministries between 2008–14 and were analysed through qualitative content analysis.

**Results**

Seven strategies relevant for public health were found from the ministries of health, economy and planning, labour, and higher education (The long-term strategy for the Saudi economy, 9th development plan 2010–14, Youth strategy, Saudi strategic plan, Saudi employment strategy, Vision statement of the Ministry of Health, and the E-health strategy). The term equity was not explicitly used in these documents but the idea of equity was implicitly communicated by addressing objectives for tackling poverty and guaranteeing that all social groups share the benefits of growth and improvement of quality of life.

**Conclusions**

The state's role to protect health and provide health care to every citizen was emphasised. However, there is a need for an in-depth analysis on the concrete policy measures and implementation addressing health equity in KSA.

**Key messages**

- Analysis on public health policies through an equity perspective has been recently conducted in 6 Arabic countries. Corresponding analysis is presently lacking from Saudi Arabia
- There is a political will in KSA for ensuring population health equity. However, further analysis of the implementation of the policy measures intended to guarantee health equity in KSA is needed

## How are health equity aspects articulated in the public health policy documents in Saudi Arabia

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**Background**

Inequities in health exist all over the world showing systematic differences in health between different socioeconomic groups. Healthy public policies (i.e. integrating health perspectives in all sector policies) address inequities in health and are means by which governments show their will to promote equity. Saudi Arabia (KSA) is one of the Arab countries that report health equity as part of its mission statement. However, analyses of the equity aspects of public health and social policies are lacking from KSA. The aims of the study were to identify policy documents in KSA relevant to public health and to explore whether the documents include an equity perspective, and whether the suggested measures in these documents communicate a clear focus on promoting equity and/or on addressing the social gradient (the term refers to, that health improves with income throughout the income distribution).