



Madrid, October 16, 2008. Ernest Lluch's Assembly Room of the Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs.

ROUND-TABLE 4: WHAT DO WE THINK OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM? The opinion of the citizens

COMMUNICATION 1: *The studies on the opinion of the citizens: methodology, goals and usefulness*

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SUMMARY

I have to acknowledge in first place the chance of sharing in this Forum some of the reflections about the importance of the studies on the opinion of the citizens. Reflections resulting from exchanges and conversations with colleagues, professionals, experts in various fields, mainly in the health field, the ones maintained with Ana Ruíz, Mercedes Alfaro, José Sarabia and many others. Every positive aspect of this communication has to be attributed to them, the negative and dubious ones are of my sole responsibility.

The relevance of the studies on the opinion of the citizens in the 21st century has two key levels about which this exposition is articulated. One concerns its goals and utilities as instruments of setting up and decision-making. Other, the one formed by the methodological features which answers for them and the wide-ranging of the aims which comprehends. Both of them are logically and fully interrelated.

The methodologies employed in the studies of opinion allow the generalization of the conclusions with some margins of error. The objectives may contain estimations of different complex realities of the present societies, dependant on the scopes which generates them and on the agents they are made up from.

In short, the studies of opinion announce differentiated opinions according to the kind of public, they have therefore the faculty of incorporating the opinions of distinct citizens. Across the time they may have vary their purposes, the views which have included, the target populations, but they have maintained their goals and general services, the procurement of the necessary information for the improvement of the different ranges and systems they are generated from. They are a key element for the information systems, they are, they have been, for the health information system.