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However much we may now think differently, until recently the standard method of representing those who suffer from myocardial infarction, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cancer, or even simple obesity was through images of white middle-class Americans, or of others from the developed world. For decades this view prevented the generality of people in those countries from realizing that such diseases predominate among the socially deprived groups in their societies. Worldwide it gave rise to the myth that these were rich men's and rich countries' diseases, and in consequence not a subject that should concern politicians and health authorities in developing countries—or even the World Health Organization itself. At WHO Headquarters, under budgetary constraints, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and other non-communicable diseases were often given less emphasis than diseases that did not occur in...

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