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Think & Talk

시사토론

07 Medicine & Healthcare

ISSUES NOW IN THE NEWS

Reading, Discussion and Critical Thinking

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1. Public vs. Private Healthcare

Should healthcare be a right or a business?

◆ Topic Overview

Across the world, healthcare systems are divided between public and private models.

Public systems aim to provide care for all, often funded by taxes, while private systems offer faster or more personalized services—at a higher cost.

Supporters of public healthcare say it ensures equal access and protects the vulnerable. Critics argue that it can be inefficient or underfunded.

Meanwhile, private healthcare offers choice and innovation but can create inequalities.

Is healthcare a basic right for everyone, or a service that people should pay for based on use?

◆ Key Vocabulary

Universal healthcare

Definition: A system where all people receive necessary health services without suffering financial hardship.

Example Sentence: "Countries with universal healthcare try to ensure that no one is denied treatment due to cost."

Privatization

Definition: The process of transferring a public service or asset to private ownership or control.

Example Sentence: "Some argue that the privatization of hospitals leads to better service but excludes the poor."



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◆ Discussion Questions

- ① What kind of healthcare system does your country use?
Do you think it works well?
- ② What are the pros and cons of having private hospitals and clinics?
- ③ Should basic medical care always be free? What about surgeries or advanced treatments?
- ④ Do you think Korea should allow more private healthcare options, or protect its public system?

◆ Idioms & Phrases

✓ “**fall through the cracks**” – To be overlooked, forgotten, or missed—usually because of a lack of attention or organization.

Example: “Some students fall through the cracks in large schools and don’t get the help they need.”

(큰 학교에서는 몇몇 학생들이 눈에 띄지 않아서 필요한 도움을 받지 못하는 경우가 있어.)

✓ “**pay out of pocket**” – To pay for something with your own money, especially when it’s unexpected or not reimbursed.

Example: “I had to pay out of pocket for the repair because the warranty had expired.”

(보증 기간이 끝나서 수리비를 내 돈으로 부담해야 했어.)

◆ Mini Debate

Statement: Governments should provide free basic healthcare to all citizens.

Do you agree or disagree? Prepare arguments and counterpoints.

