

# People with less education could be more susceptible to the flu

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People who did not earn a high school diploma could be more likely to get H1N1 and the vaccine might be less effective in them compared to those who earned a diploma, new research shows.

The University of Michigan study looked at a latent virus called CMV in young people, and the body's ability to control the virus. Previous studies have shown that elderly people with less education are less successful at fighting off CMV, but this is the first known study to make that connection in younger adults as well, said study co-author Jennifer Dowd, who began the work while in the Health and Society Scholars program at the U-M School of Public Health.

Previous studies have shown that high levels of CMV antibodies make it tougher for the elderly to fight new infections like H1N1, and hampers the body's immune response to the flu vaccine. The U-M findings suggest that lower [socioeconomic status](#) may make it tougher even for adults of all ages to fight new infections and may make the [flu vaccine](#) less effective.

"We're showing that the ability to keep CMV under control varies by income and education even at much younger ages, and this could have implications for the ability to fight new infections like H1N1 for all ages, not just the elderly," said Dowd, now an assistant professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at Hunter College. Allison Aiello, assistant professor of epidemiology at University of Michigan SPH, is co-author.



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