

Marriage and a high socioeconomic level improve health

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People with a high socioeconomic level have been demonstrated to have better health than the rest of people. Other protective factors against chronic diseases are having higher education, having a job, and the per capita income and welfare in the region of residence.

These are some of the conclusions drawn in a pioneer study conducted at the University of Granada by Kristina Karlsdotter, at the Department of Applied Economics, and supervised by professors José Jesús Martín Martín and María del Puerto López del Amo González. The study also reveals the potential long-term effects that socioeconomic inequalities have on the health of the population at regional level, and the relevance of family when it comes to assess how social inequalities affect population's health.

To carry out this study, the researchers used data from two surveys conducted in Spain: the 2007 Survey on Living Conditions, performed by the Spanish National Statistics Institute, and the 2001 Longitudinal Database of the Andalusian Population conducted by the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia and the Spanish National Research Council.

The Higher the Income, the Better the Health

University of Granada researchers have found that the individual income of a person "is positively associated with a good health status".

Additionally, education level is statistically associated with health status: the higher the education level, the better the health of the individual according to several health variables: perceived health status –the perception that an individual has on his/her own health status– presence of [chronic diseases](#), and the risk of been granted a temporary/permanent disability pension.

This study reveals the influence of family environment on an individual's health status. Thus, over 30% of variations in an individual's health status are caused by their family environment.

Social relationships are another protective factor against disease, but only in women.

Design of Policies

The authors of this study affirm that the results obtained "are relevant for the design of policies aimed at reducing health inequalities in Spain. The association between health status and the geographical (Autonomous Community, province, city, district) and family environment is very innovative, as well as the association between health status and income and social inequalities. "

This is a pioneer comparative study in Spain on the relationship between individual income, [income](#) inequalities, regional and social factors, and health status in people in Spain. This is also the first study to examine how the social environment affects an individual's [health status](#). Finally, this is the first study to analyze the distribution of temporary/permanent disability pensions according to socioeconomic and geographic factors.

More information: Karlsdotter, K; Martín Martín, JJ; López del Amo González, MP (2012). Multilevel analysis of income, income inequalities and health in Spain. *Social Science and Medicine*. 2012.

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