

# A country's level of education correlates well with life expectancy at birth

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The level of education in a given country correlates well with life expectancy at birth, according to a new study published in the International Journal of Innovation and Learning. The researchers suggest that educating the young as well as encouraging lifelong learning could both improve the figures still further.

Anica Novak of the NGO Association for Education and Sustainable Development, in Portorož, Slovenia, and colleagues explain that life expectancy at [birth](#) has increased by 21 years from 46.6 years in 1950–1955 to 67.6 years in 2005–2010. However, for that latter period the improvement in less developed countries was not on average as good as in developed nations. Average life expectancy in the former is still 11 years lower than life expectancy at birth in developed countries.

Many researchers have investigated factors that affect life expectancy at birth. Of course, the standard of public health, environmental concerns, food availability, water supply, availability of modern medicine, lifestyle, exposure to lethal diseases and many other factors determine the chances that a newborn will survive into old age.

Education too has been shown by various studies to affect life expectancy. "A higher [education level](#) among [young women](#) positively affects their reproductive health and their status in a family, community and society," Novak reports. One possible factor, she adds, is that, "More educated women are less likely to get infected with HIV which further increases life expectancy at birth." Others have shown that

increasing the length of formal education among [young people](#) positively affects their professional career and improves their living standard and consequently life expectancy at birth. The team also adds that others have shown that teenage pregnancy and motherhood is associated with lower education of young women, lower income and living standard and consequently lower life expectancy at birth.

The team has now tested statistically the importance of education level on data from 187 countries taking into account whether gender inequality negatively impacts [life expectancy](#) at birth, whether expected years of schooling have a positive impact and whether years of schooling is actually one of the strongest determinants. "Our research confirms the importance of a country's education level and implies that societies should encourage education among young people as well as [education](#) of adults through lifelong learning programmes," the team concludes.

**More information:** Novak, A., Cepar, Ž. And Trunk, A. (2016) 'The Role Of Expected Years Of Schooling Among Life Expectancy Determinants', *Int. J. Innovation And Learning*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Pp.85-99.

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