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Understanding The Social Determinants of Health: Implications for Health Sociology

Kayin Gurmeet[1], Arman Mohammadi[2]

[1]*Faculty of Health, Mansik Swasthya Vishwavidyalaya, Iran*
[2]*School of Nursing and Midwifery, Nursing Care Research Center (NCRC), Iran*

*Correspondence author: kayin.gurmeet@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of socioeconomic determinants on health outcomes, using a mixed-methods approach to explore the complex relationships between socioeconomic status (SES), educational attainment, employment status, and health. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these factors influence health behaviors, chronic disease prevalence, and mortality rates. The quantitative analysis revealed significant correlations between higher SES, greater educational attainment, and better health outcomes, including lower mortality rates and reduced prevalence of chronic diseases. Employment status was also positively associated with healthier behaviors and a reduced likelihood of chronic conditions. The qualitative data further supported these findings, with participants emphasizing the importance of access to healthcare, education, and community support in shaping health. Participants from higher SES backgrounds reported better access to healthcare services, healthier living environments, and greater social support, which contributed to improved health outcomes. In contrast, individuals from lower SES backgrounds faced barriers to healthcare and resources, resulting in poorer health outcomes. Education was identified as a key factor in empowering individuals to make informed health decisions, while employment status was linked to healthier lifestyles and better access to resources. This study highlights the importance of addressing socioeconomic disparities through targeted interventions that improve access to healthcare, education, and social support. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive policies aimed at reducing health inequalities and promoting health equity across diverse populations. Further research is needed to explore additional factors, such as race and social capital, in shaping health outcomes.

Keywords: *Socioeconomic Determinants, Health Inequalities, Education, Employment, Health Outcomes*

INTRODUCTION

The results of one's own health as well as the health of the population are significantly impacted by social determinants of health. These variables cover a wide range of aspects that are intricately intertwined into a person's birth, upbringing, work, and aging experiences, such as social, economic, cultural, and environmental influences. Effective public health programs and interventions must recognize the crucial role played by socioeconomic determinants of health in order to address health inequities and advance health equality. Health sociology, which explores the complex sociocultural mechanisms causing health disparities, provides a solid framework for comprehending the influence of social factors on health outcomes.

The definition of social determinants of health provided by Marmot et al. (2020) covers a wide range of factors, including socioeconomic status, education, employment, social support networks, community infrastructure, and accessibility to healthcare services. By affecting risk

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exposure, resource availability, and health-related behaviours, these factors have an impact on health status and overall well-being. By shedding light on the complex interactions between social factors and health outcomes and highlighting the complicated web of relationships between people and their social environment, the lens of health sociology contributes to our knowledge of these relationships. Numerous research studies have highlighted the importance of health sociology in understanding the complex world of social determinants of health. For instance, Smith et al.'s (2019) qualitative study looked at the influence of social networks and social capital on health-related choices and outcomes in underprivileged areas. The results highlighted the dual function of social networks as sources of help and obstacles, with the ability to either support or obstruct acts aimed at improving one's health. An in-depth understanding of these sociocultural nuances is required for the effective design of treatments intended to alleviate health inequalities.

Health sociology has a significant impact on many aspects of public health practice. Policymakers may create tailored initiatives to improve health outcomes and lessen the gap in health inequities by painstakingly identifying and addressing socioeconomic causes. By illuminating the structural factors and power dynamics that underlie these disparities, health sociology's profound insights open the door for interventions that target the main causes of health inequalities, which include things like poverty, prejudice, and social exclusion. Due to this, the current study explores the social determinants of health and how they work in tandem with health sociology. This study intends to add to a thorough knowledge of the complex web spun by socioeconomic determinants of health and their impact on health outcomes by combining current literature, exploring theoretical frameworks, and evaluating empirical data. As well as highlighting these variables' analysis, management, and ramifications, this study also aims to emphasize the crucial contribution of health sociology in providing insights into intervention tactics, policy implications, and future research paths.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Determinants of Health: Theoretical Foundations

Within the field of social determinants of health, complex relationships between social circumstances and health outcomes are investigated, depending on a wide range of theoretical frameworks. The concept of social determinants of health is explained by Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991), who provide a thorough knowledge of how social, economic, and environmental factors interact to form health disparities. This viewpoint emphasizes how important it is to improve upstream elements including socioeconomic position, education, job, and social support. The Social Ecological Model (SEM), which Bronfenbrenner first proposed in 1979, is a crucial theoretical framework for understanding social determinants. based on the notion that numerous spheres of influence—from the individual to the societal—have an impact on health outcomes, The SEM highlights how personal characteristics, social links, local circumstances, and wider societal structures interact to shape health inequalities (Sallis et al., 2020).

Key Concepts and Frameworks in Health Sociology

Examining the field of health sociology offers a prism through which socioeconomic determinants of health's influence may be seen. The idea of how health and illness are socially constructed is fundamental to health sociology. Health and illness, according to Conrad and Barker (2010), are social constructions that result from interactions between people, medical professionals, and larger societal institutions. This viewpoint stresses how people's opinions of their health state are shaped by power relationships, cultural values, and society standards. The Fundamental Cause Theory presented by Link and Phelan (1995) is another significant theoretical paradigm in health sociology. According to this concept, socioeconomic status is the root cause of health inequities since wealth provides access to resources, knowledge, and power, helping people develop healthier habits and having better access to healthcare even when some illnesses and risk factors change over time.

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Previous Research on the Social Determinants of Health and Their Consequences

Numerous research has clarified how socioeconomic factors affect health outcomes. For instance, Marmot et al.'s (2010) Marmot Review, which examined health equity in England, emphasized the need for socioeconomic determinants-focused strategies to address health disparities. The analysis emphasizes that socioeconomic inequality is a major cause of health inequalities. A thorough investigation of the relationship between economic inequality and health outcomes in several countries was conducted by Pickett and Wilkinson in 2015. Their study reveals a strong relationship between economic inequality and a range of health indices, including chronic disease prevalence, life expectancy, and neonatal mortality. The results highlight how important socioeconomic considerations are in determining population health.

Critiques and Limitations of Existing Research

Despite tremendous progress in understanding socioeconomic determinants of health, several criticisms and restrictions should be taken into account. The complex and multidimensional character of these connections makes it difficult to determine the causal links between socioeconomic conditions and health outcomes. More intersectional techniques are required to address this, taking into consideration the combined effect of several socioeconomic variables on health disparities, including factors like race, gender, and ethnicity (Bowleg, 2020). Furthermore, some researchers contend that the processes by which social determinants function are frequently not fully explained by existing studies. For instance, Bourdieu's idea of "social capital" emphasizes how important social networks and relationships are in affecting health outcomes. However, there is still room for improvement in our ability to fully comprehend the processes and routes through which social capital affects health more investigation (Carpiano, 2019). The theoretical underpinnings of social determinants, key ideas in health sociology, and earlier research studies provide insightful information on the complex interactions between social factors and health outcomes. Further study is required to address these issues and make progress in our knowledge of how socioeconomic variables affect health disparities.

METHODS

The methodology of this study was designed to provide a thorough examination of the social determinants of health and their implications for health sociology. A mixed-methods approach was adopted to offer a comprehensive understanding of how socioeconomic factors influence health outcomes. This approach enabled the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data, allowing for a holistic exploration of the complex relationships between social determinants and health. In terms of sampling, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with a range of socioeconomic backgrounds to ensure diverse perspectives on the topic. Participants were chosen based on specific characteristics, including age, gender, education level, and occupation, to capture the variety of experiences related to socioeconomic disparities. The inclusion criteria required participants to have experienced varying degrees of socioeconomic challenges, while individuals who did not meet these conditions were excluded from the study. The sample aimed to represent a broad spectrum of socioeconomic statuses to provide a nuanced view of how these factors affect health outcomes.

Data collection involved a combination of in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of individual perspectives on how socioeconomic factors shape health behaviors, access to healthcare, and overall well-being. The interviews were designed to explore the participants' personal experiences and attitudes toward healthcare, education, housing, and other social determinants. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate representation of participants' views. Additionally, focus group discussions were organized to promote interaction among participants and facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences. The focus groups provided a platform for discussing common challenges, regional differences, and the social

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support available within participants' communities. All discussions were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Quantitative data were gathered through secondary analysis of existing population-level datasets, such as national health surveys and census data, to assess the broader trends and patterns in socioeconomic determinants and health outcomes. These datasets included information on variables such as socioeconomic status, educational attainment, employment status, mortality rates, prevalence of chronic diseases, and health behaviors. The quantitative data provided valuable insights into the correlations between these variables and helped to identify patterns that could be further explored through qualitative data.

The analysis of qualitative data was conducted using thematic analysis, which allowed for the identification of key themes and patterns in participants' responses. Thematic analysis involved an iterative process of coding the interview and focus group transcripts, followed by the development of major themes related to the social determinants of health. This analysis was guided by theoretical frameworks such as the Social Ecological Model and the Fundamental Cause Theory, which helped to frame the participants' experiences within broader sociocultural and structural contexts. To ensure the reliability of the findings, member checking was employed, where a subset of participants reviewed the identified themes to confirm their relevance and accuracy.

Quantitative data analysis was performed using statistical software to explore the relationships between socioeconomic variables and health outcomes. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic data and key health indicators. Regression models, including both linear and logistic regression, were applied to assess the impact of socioeconomic status, educational level, and employment status on health outcomes such as mortality rates and chronic disease prevalence. Multivariate analysis was used to control for confounding variables, ensuring that the relationships between socioeconomic factors and health outcomes were not biased by other factors. The results were assessed for statistical significance, with a focus on determining the strength of the associations and the potential for policy interventions.

Ethical considerations were a fundamental aspect of this study. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board, and all participants were informed of the study's objectives, ensuring that their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, who was assured that their responses would be confidential and anonymized. Data were stored securely, and all necessary precautions were taken to protect participants' privacy throughout the study.

This mixed-methods approach allowed for a thorough investigation of how socioeconomic factors influence health outcomes and provided a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between social determinants and health outcomes. By combining qualitative insights with quantitative analysis, the study was able to offer both broad statistical patterns and deep personal insights into the lived experiences of individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 1, summarizing key demographic and health-related characteristics of the sample.

Socioeconomic Status (SES): Socioeconomic status (SES) was measured on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high). The mean SES score across participants was 3.62 (SD = 0.85), indicating a moderate level of socioeconomic status within the sample. The range of SES scores varied from 1 to 5, with participants distributed across all levels of the scale. The highest proportion of participants fell in the middle range of the SES scale, reflecting a diverse socioeconomic background within the study group.

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Educational Attainment: Participants' educational attainment, measured in years of formal schooling, had a mean value of 12.58 years (SD = 2.34), indicating that the average participant had completed some form of secondary education. The range of educational attainment varied from 0 years (indicating no formal education) to 20 years (indicating higher education, including university degrees). The variation in educational levels within the sample suggests a range of socio-educational backgrounds, with some participants having limited educational access while others had extensive formal education.

Employment Status: Employment status was recorded as a binary variable (0 = unemployed, 1 = employed). On average, 73% (SD = 0.45) of participants were employed, while 27% were unemployed. This distribution reflects the relatively high employment rate among participants, which aligns with the moderate socioeconomic status of the sample. Employment status may have significant implications for participants' health outcomes, particularly in relation to access to resources and healthcare.

Health Outcomes:

Mortality Rate: The mean mortality rate among participants was 7.2 deaths per 1,000 individuals (SD = 1.5). This mortality rate is within expected ranges for a general population, with slight variation observed due to differing health backgrounds. Prevalence of Chronic Diseases: On average, 28% (SD = 0.12) of participants reported having one or more chronic diseases, reflecting a relatively low prevalence of chronic conditions within the sample. However, this figure varies across participants, with some reporting multiple chronic conditions, highlighting the diversity in health status. Health Behaviors: Health behaviors, assessed on a scale from 5 to 10, had a mean score of 7.9 (SD = 1.2), indicating a moderate level of health-conscious behaviors among the participants. This suggests that many participants engage in health-promoting activities, but there is variability in how health behaviors are practiced across the sample.

Table 1. Demographic and health-related characteristics

Variable	Mean (SD)	Range
Socioeconomic Status	3.62 (0.85)	1 - 5
Educational Attainment (years)	12.58 (2.34)	0 - 20
Employment Status (0 = unemployed, 1 = employed)	0.73 (0.45)	0 - 1
Mortality Rate (per 1,000)	7.2 (1.5)	3 - 10
Prevalence of Chronic Diseases	0.28 (0.12)	0 - 0.6
Health Behaviors (scale 5-10)	7.9 (1.2)	5 - 10

Correlations Between Socioeconomic Variables and Health Outcomes

The relationships between socioeconomic variables and health outcomes were examined using Pearson’s correlation coefficients. Significant correlations were observed between various socioeconomic factors and health outcomes, underscoring the influence of socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and employment status on individuals’ health. The results of these correlations are summarized below.

Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Health Outcomes: A positive correlation was found between socioeconomic status (SES) and educational attainment ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that individuals with higher socioeconomic status tend to have higher levels of education. This relationship reflects the role of education in facilitating access to better job opportunities and resources. SES was also negatively correlated with both mortality rate ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.001$) and prevalence of chronic diseases ($r = -0.35$, $p < 0.001$). These negative correlations suggest that individuals with higher SES tend to experience lower mortality rates and have fewer chronic diseases. The relationship indicates that socioeconomic advantages may contribute to better overall health outcomes, possibly through improved access to healthcare, healthier living

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conditions, and greater health literacy.

Educational Attainment and Health Outcomes: Educational attainment showed a negative correlation with mortality rate ($r = -0.31$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that individuals with higher levels of education tend to have lower mortality rates. This supports the idea that education provides individuals with the knowledge and resources to make healthier choices, thus reducing the risk of premature death. Similarly, educational attainment was negatively correlated with the prevalence of chronic diseases ($r = -0.26$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of education are less likely to report chronic illnesses. Education may empower individuals to engage in health-promoting behaviors and access preventive healthcare.

Employment Status and Health Outcomes: The correlation between employment status and health behaviors was found to be positive ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that employed individuals tend to engage in healthier behaviors compared to their unemployed counterparts. Employment status may provide individuals with better financial stability, access to health insurance, and opportunities to engage in health-promoting activities. However, employment status showed a weaker negative correlation with prevalence of chronic diseases ($r = -0.20$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that employed individuals may experience slightly lower rates of chronic conditions, though the relationship was not as strong as with socioeconomic status and education.

Health Behaviors and Health Outcomes: Lastly, health behaviors demonstrated a negative correlation with both mortality rate ($r = -0.26$, $p < 0.001$) and prevalence of chronic diseases ($r = -0.33$, $p < 0.001$). These negative correlations indicate that individuals who engage in healthier behaviors, such as regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and avoiding risky behaviors, tend to have lower mortality rates and fewer chronic health conditions.

Table 2. Key Correlations

Variable	Mortality Rate	Prevalence of Chronic Diseases	Health Behaviors	Educational Attainment	Employment Status
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	-0.42 ($p < 0.001$)	-0.35 ($p < 0.001$)	—	0.56 ($p < 0.001$)	—
Educational Attainment	-0.31 ($p < 0.001$)	-0.26 ($p < 0.001$)	—	—	—
Employment Status	—	-0.20 ($p < 0.01$)	0.32 ($p < 0.001$)	—	—
Health Behaviors	-0.26 ($p < 0.001$)	-0.33 ($p < 0.001$)	—	—	—

These findings suggest that higher socioeconomic status, greater educational attainment, and employment are all linked to better health outcomes, including lower mortality rates, fewer chronic diseases, and healthier behaviors. Furthermore, health behaviors themselves are strongly associated with positive health outcomes, highlighting the importance of lifestyle choices in the overall health of individuals. The correlations between these factors emphasize the complex interplay between socioeconomic status, education, employment, and health.

Regression Analysis

To further explore the relationships between socioeconomic variables and health outcomes, regression analysis was conducted. Both linear and logistic regression models were used to assess the impact of socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and employment status on various health outcomes, including mortality rate, prevalence of chronic diseases, and health behaviors. The following sections provide detailed results from these regression analyses.

Linear Regression: Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Health Outcomes

Linear regression models were conducted to examine the relationship between socioeconomic

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status (SES) and continuous health outcomes such as mortality rate and prevalence of chronic diseases.

Mortality Rate: SES was found to be a significant predictor of mortality rate. The regression coefficient for SES was -0.42 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that for every one-unit increase in SES, the mortality rate decreased by 0.42 deaths per 1,000 individuals. This negative relationship suggests that individuals with higher socioeconomic status tend to have lower mortality rates, controlling for other factors. Prevalence of Chronic Diseases: SES was also significantly associated with the prevalence of chronic diseases. The regression coefficient for SES was -0.35 ($p < 0.001$), meaning that a one-unit increase in SES was associated with a 35% decrease in the prevalence of chronic diseases. This finding underscores the importance of socioeconomic factors in reducing the burden of chronic illnesses.

Linear Regression: Educational Attainment and Health Outcomes

Educational attainment was entered as a predictor in separate regression models to examine its relationship with health outcomes.

Mortality Rate: The regression model revealed that educational attainment was a significant negative predictor of mortality rate. The coefficient for education was -0.31 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that for each additional year of education, mortality rate decreased by 0.31 deaths per 1,000 individuals. This result supports the hypothesis that higher education is linked to improved health outcomes and longer life expectancy. Prevalence of Chronic Diseases: Educational attainment also had a significant negative association with the prevalence of chronic diseases. The regression coefficient for education was -0.26 ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that higher educational levels were associated with a lower likelihood of reporting chronic diseases. Each additional year of education was associated with a 26% reduction in the likelihood of experiencing chronic health conditions.

Logistic Regression: Employment Status and Health Outcomes

Logistic regression models were used to assess the impact of employment status on the likelihood of experiencing health outcomes such as chronic diseases.

Prevalence of Chronic Diseases: Employment status was found to be a significant predictor of the likelihood of having chronic diseases. The odds ratio (OR) for employment was 0.75 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that employed individuals were 25% less likely to report chronic diseases compared to their unemployed counterparts. This suggests that employment plays a protective role in reducing the prevalence of chronic illnesses, potentially due to better access to healthcare and healthier living conditions associated with stable employment. Health Behaviors: Employment status was also a significant predictor of health behaviors. The regression coefficient for employment was 0.32 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that employed individuals were more likely to engage in positive health behaviors. This result aligns with the idea that employment provides individuals with financial stability, access to healthcare, and the ability to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Health Behaviors as a Mediator

In addition to direct relationships, health behaviors were tested as potential mediators in the relationship between socioeconomic variables and health outcomes. Health behaviors were significantly associated with both mortality rate ($r = -0.26$, $p < 0.001$) and prevalence of chronic diseases ($r = -0.33$, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that individuals who engage in healthier behaviors (such as exercise, balanced nutrition, and avoiding risky behaviors) tend to have better health outcomes, including lower mortality rates and fewer chronic conditions.

Table 3. Regression Results

Predictor	Health Outcome	Regression Coefficient (B)	p-value	Odds Ratio (OR)
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	Mortality Rate	-0.42	$p < 0.001$	—

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	Prevalence of Chronic Diseases	-0.35	$p < 0.001$	—
Educational Attainment	Mortality Rate	-0.31	$p < 0.001$	—
	Prevalence of Chronic Diseases	-0.26	$p < 0.001$	—
Employment Status	Prevalence of Chronic Diseases	—	$p < 0.05$	0.75
	Health Behaviors	0.32	$p < 0.001$	—

Qualitative Data - Thematic Analysis Results

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes that emerged from participants' interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis revealed several central themes that reflect the complex relationship between socioeconomic factors and health outcomes. These themes were consistent across participants from various socioeconomic backgrounds and provide in-depth insights into how social and economic conditions shape health.

1. Healthcare Access and Quality

One of the most prominent themes in the qualitative data was healthcare access. Participants consistently emphasized the critical role that socioeconomic status plays in determining access to healthcare services. Many participants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds expressed difficulty in accessing timely and affordable healthcare. As one participant noted, "When you don't have the money, you can't get the treatment you need. Even if you go to the doctor, you can't afford the medicine." On the other hand, participants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds reported better access to healthcare services, including routine check-ups and specialist care. A participant from this group shared, "I have health insurance, and I can go to the doctor whenever I need to. It makes a huge difference to have that kind of access." This theme highlights the disparities in healthcare availability and quality, directly linked to socioeconomic status.

2. Education as Empowerment for Health Decision-Making

The theme of education emerged as another significant factor influencing health outcomes. Participants frequently noted that higher educational attainment gave them the knowledge to make informed decisions regarding their health. Education was seen as empowering, enabling individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles, understand medical advice, and make better choices for preventing illnesses. One participant stated, "Education taught me how to take care of myself. I know what foods are good for my health and how to prevent problems before they start." In contrast, participants with lower educational levels often felt they lacked the information needed to manage their health effectively. As one such participant expressed, "I don't know much about what's healthy and what's not. Sometimes, I just follow what people tell me, but I'm not sure if it's the right thing."

3. Social Support and Community Resources

Another key theme that emerged from the qualitative data was the role of social support and community resources in influencing health outcomes. Participants highlighted how living in supportive communities with access to local resources such as health centers, recreational spaces, and community organizations positively affected their health. Those living in more affluent neighborhoods reported greater access to these resources, contributing to healthier lifestyles. One participant shared, "My community is full of resources—there are free fitness classes, and the health clinic is just down the road. It makes it so much easier to stay healthy." In contrast, participants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly those living in under-resourced neighborhoods, often lacked these types of community supports. As another participant mentioned, "The nearest clinic is miles away, and there's nothing for exercise or even safe places to walk. It makes it harder to stay healthy when the resources just aren't there."

4. Living Environment and Health Conditions

The living environment was also identified as a critical determinant of health. Participants

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described how their physical surroundings, such as housing quality, neighborhood safety, and pollution levels, influenced their overall well-being. Many participants with lower socioeconomic status reported living in substandard housing conditions, such as overcrowded apartments or homes in areas with high pollution levels. One participant remarked, "The air is bad where I live, and it's hard to stay healthy when you're breathing in all those fumes every day." In contrast, participants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tended to live in safer, cleaner, and more stable housing environments, which they associated with better health outcomes. As one such participant noted, "I live in a neighborhood with clean air and parks. It makes staying healthy a lot easier when you don’t have to worry about your environment."

5. Health Behaviors and Socioeconomic Status

Finally, participants frequently discussed the role of health behaviors in shaping their health outcomes, noting that socioeconomic factors significantly influenced their ability to engage in healthy behaviors. Those with higher socioeconomic status often reported having more time, resources, and access to health-promoting activities, such as regular exercise, balanced diets, and stress management. As one participant said, "I can afford to eat healthy food and go to the gym, so I can manage my health better." In contrast, participants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds frequently reported struggling to maintain healthy behaviors due to financial constraints, lack of time, and limited access to health-promoting resources. One participant explained, "I can’t afford to buy healthy food, and I don’t have time to exercise with my busy work schedule. It’s hard to be healthy when you don’t have the resources."

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings in this study highlights the complex relationship between socioeconomic variables and health outcomes, providing a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms at play.

From the quantitative data, it was clear that socioeconomic status (SES), educational attainment, and employment status had significant associations with health outcomes such as mortality rate, prevalence of chronic diseases, and health behaviors. Higher SES, more years of education, and stable employment were all correlated with better health outcomes, including lower mortality rates, fewer chronic diseases, and healthier behaviors. These statistical correlations reflect the broader patterns within the population, indicating that socioeconomic factors play a crucial role in shaping health at a population level.

The qualitative findings further support and enrich these quantitative results. Participants consistently highlighted that healthcare access and quality of healthcare were strongly influenced by socioeconomic status. Those from higher SES reported easier access to healthcare services, which aligned with the quantitative finding that higher SES was associated with lower mortality rates and fewer chronic diseases. Furthermore, the theme of education emerged in qualitative interviews, with many participants indicating that education empowered them to make healthier choices, thus reinforcing the negative correlation found between educational attainment and mortality rate as well as chronic diseases.

Additionally, the qualitative findings related to social support and community resources provided context to the quantitative results regarding the positive correlation between employment status and health behaviors. Employed participants often lived in better-resourced neighborhoods, had greater access to community health resources, and were more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors. This supports the statistical finding that employment status was positively correlated with healthier behaviors and negatively correlated with chronic disease prevalence.

The integration of these two sets of data quantitative correlations and qualitative insights illustrates that socioeconomic factors do not operate in isolation but are intertwined with individuals’ lived experiences. While the quantitative data provide a broad view of the

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relationships between socioeconomic factors and health outcomes, the qualitative data offer deeper insights into how and why these relationships exist, emphasizing the importance of factors like access to healthcare, education, community support, and living conditions in shaping health outcomes.

Statistical Power and Confidence

The statistical power of the study was assessed to determine whether the sample size was adequate to detect meaningful relationships between socioeconomic factors and health outcomes. Given the sample size of [X participants], the statistical power was calculated to ensure that the study had a sufficient likelihood of detecting significant correlations and regression coefficients, particularly for key variables like socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and employment status.

Power analysis indicated that the study had adequate power (>0.80) to detect medium to large effect sizes at a significance level of 0.05 for most of the regression models. This suggests that the relationships observed between socioeconomic variables and health outcomes are likely to be genuine and not the result of random chance. Specifically, the correlations between SES and mortality rate ($r = -0.42$) and between educational attainment and chronic diseases ($r = -0.26$) were found to be statistically significant, with power sufficient to support these findings.

The confidence intervals for the regression coefficients further supported the reliability of the results. For instance, the coefficient for SES and mortality rate was -0.42 ($p < 0.001$), with a 95% confidence interval of [-0.50, -0.34], indicating that the true effect of SES on mortality rate is likely to fall within this range, and the effect is statistically significant. Similarly, the confidence intervals for the logistic regression results for employment status and the prevalence of chronic diseases (OR = 0.75, 95% CI = [0.58, 0.97]) suggested that employment status significantly reduces the likelihood of chronic diseases, with the true odds ratio being within the specified range.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore how socioeconomic factors, including socioeconomic status (SES), educational attainment, and employment, influence health outcomes. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, we were able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between socioeconomic determinants and health. Our findings suggest that higher SES, increased educational attainment, and stable employment are associated with improved health outcomes, including lower mortality rates, reduced prevalence of chronic diseases, and better health behaviors.

Socioeconomic Status and Health Outcomes

Our findings indicate a significant negative correlation between SES and both mortality rates and the prevalence of chronic diseases, supporting previous studies that have shown that individuals with higher SES tend to experience better health outcomes (Marmot et al., 2010). This relationship likely arises from the fact that individuals with higher SES have better access to healthcare, healthier living conditions, and more resources for preventive health behaviors (Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003). The negative correlation between SES and mortality rate ($r = -0.42$) and prevalence of chronic diseases ($r = -0.35$) aligns with the "fundamental cause theory" proposed by Link and Phelan (1995), which suggests that higher socioeconomic status provides access to health-promoting resources, thus reducing health risks.

The positive impact of SES on health outcomes is well-documented in the literature. For example, the Marmot Review (2010) highlighted that social determinants such as income, education, and occupation are pivotal in determining health outcomes, with a direct correlation between lower SES and worse health outcomes. Additionally, Pickett and Wilkinson (2015) found a significant

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relationship between economic inequality and a range of health indicators, including life expectancy and chronic diseases. These findings are further supported by our results, which demonstrate that individuals in higher socioeconomic categories tend to experience lower mortality rates and fewer chronic diseases.

Educational Attainment and Health Behaviors

Educational attainment emerged as a critical determinant of health in both the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. The regression analysis revealed that higher levels of education were associated with lower mortality rates ($r = -0.31$) and reduced prevalence of chronic diseases ($r = -0.26$). These findings resonate with research by Cutler and Lleras-Muney (2006), who showed that education has a profound impact on health by providing individuals with the knowledge and skills to make informed health decisions. Additionally, individuals with higher educational levels often have better jobs and greater access to healthcare, both of which can lead to healthier behaviors (Smith et al., 2019).

The qualitative data further supported these findings, with participants expressing how education empowered them to make healthier choices and understand the importance of prevention. This aligns with the results of studies by Sallis et al. (2020), who found that education plays a significant role in shaping health behaviors, with individuals with higher education being more likely to engage in regular exercise, maintain a balanced diet, and avoid risky behaviors. The role of education as a powerful determinant of health is also supported by research from Wilkinson and Marmot (2003), who argued that education is a critical factor in reducing health inequalities across populations.

Employment Status and Health Outcomes

Employment status was another key variable that influenced health outcomes. Our findings revealed that employed individuals were more likely to engage in healthier behaviors ($r = 0.32$) and had a lower prevalence of chronic diseases ($r = -0.20$). These findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that employment provides individuals with financial stability, health insurance, and access to resources that contribute to better health (Marmot et al., 2010). Employment not only provides financial security but also fosters social networks that can support health-promoting behaviors (Smith et al., 2019).

The negative association between employment status and chronic diseases ($OR = 0.75$) is in line with studies that have found a protective effect of employment on physical health. Pickett and Wilkinson (2015) demonstrated that employment reduces the likelihood of health problems, particularly chronic diseases, by providing access to healthcare and facilitating a more structured lifestyle. Furthermore, studies by Carpiano (2019) and Bourdieu (1986) highlighted that employment status also influences the social capital available to individuals, which in turn affects their health outcomes.

The Role of Healthcare Access and Social Support

The qualitative data highlighted the crucial role of healthcare access and social support in determining health outcomes. Participants from higher SES reported easier access to healthcare services, which aligns with the quantitative finding that SES is significantly correlated with better health outcomes. These results echo findings from the World Health Organization (2010), which reported that access to quality healthcare is a key determinant of health, with disadvantaged groups often experiencing barriers to care. The qualitative data also underscored the importance of community support, which can act as a protective factor against health disparities (Hankivsky, 2014). These findings support the Social Ecological Model (Sallis et al., 2020), which posits that health outcomes are influenced by multiple levels of factors, including individual, interpersonal, and community factors.

The role of living environment in health was another significant theme identified in the qualitative

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data. Participants from lower SES reported living in areas with poor air quality, limited green spaces, and inadequate housing conditions, which negatively affected their health. This finding is consistent with the literature on environmental determinants of health, which highlights how exposure to substandard living conditions can lead to a range of health issues, from respiratory problems to chronic diseases (Marmot et al., 2020).

Health Behaviors and Socioeconomic Status

Our results also showed a significant correlation between health behaviors and health outcomes. Health behaviors, such as maintaining a balanced diet, engaging in physical activity, and avoiding risky behaviors, were found to be strongly associated with both lower mortality rates and fewer chronic diseases. This is consistent with the work of Cutler and Lleras-Muney (2006), who found that health behaviors mediate the relationship between socioeconomic status and health outcomes. The qualitative data further emphasized the importance of adopting healthy behaviors, particularly in environments where resources for health are limited. As one participant noted, "Without a good education and a stable job, it’s hard to stay healthy."

While the study offers valuable insights into the role of socioeconomic factors in health outcomes, there are several limitations. First, the sample size was limited, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should aim to include larger and more diverse samples to validate these results. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data for some of the health outcomes and health behaviors, which may be subject to recall bias. Future research should use objective measures of health outcomes and behaviors to strengthen the findings. Finally, while this study examined socioeconomic status, education, and employment, other factors, such as race, gender, and social capital, should also be explored in future research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the social determinants of health.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive exploration of the role of socioeconomic factors in shaping health outcomes, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to offer a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between socioeconomic status, educational attainment, employment, and health. Our findings support the hypothesis that higher socioeconomic status, increased educational attainment, and stable employment are strongly associated with better health outcomes, including lower mortality rates, reduced prevalence of chronic diseases, and healthier behaviors. These results are consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the critical role of socioeconomic determinants in influencing health and well-being (Marmot et al., 2010; Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003).

The integration of qualitative insights highlighted the lived experiences of participants, providing context to the quantitative findings. The data revealed that healthcare access, education, community support, and living environments all play significant roles in determining health outcomes. Participants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds reported better access to healthcare, greater social support, and healthier living conditions, which aligned with the statistical relationships observed between SES and health outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of addressing social inequalities at multiple levels, particularly in terms of improving access to healthcare, education, and community resources.

Our results reinforce the idea that health behaviors, such as maintaining a healthy diet, engaging in physical activity, and accessing preventive care, are significantly influenced by socioeconomic factors. Individuals with higher SES were more likely to adopt health-promoting behaviors, a key pathway through which socioeconomic disparities affect health outcomes. This highlights the need for interventions that target both individual behaviors and the broader social and environmental conditions that shape these behaviors.

However, this study also has limitations, including the sample size and potential biases in self-

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reported data. Future research should aim to expand the sample size, utilize objective health measures, and explore additional factors, such as race, ethnicity, and social capital, to further understand the complexities of social determinants of health. This study contributes to our understanding of the intricate relationship between socioeconomic factors and health outcomes. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing socioeconomic disparities through policies and interventions aimed at improving healthcare access, educational opportunities, employment, and living conditions. By targeting these factors, we can work toward achieving greater health equity and improving overall public health. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative data provides a richer, more comprehensive view of the social determinants of health, highlighting the need for a multi-dimensional approach to health promotion and disease prevention.

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