Educational Attainment and (Healthy) Life Expectancy

Jennifer Karas Montez, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology
Faculty Affiliate, Aging Studies Institute
Faculty Affiliate, Center for Policy Research
Syracuse University

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Outline of Talk

Part 1: Healthy Life Expectancy

Part 2: Mechanisms

Part 3: Life Span View

Part 4: Summary
What is it and why is it important?
“Live Long and Prosper”

Total Life Expectancy

Healthy

Unhealthy

birth

dead
Impact of Education on Total & Healthy Life Expectancy

Impact of Education on Total & Healthy Life Expectancy

Education Level

- 13+ years: 79% of adult life healthy
- 9-12 years: 66% of adult life healthy
- 0-8 years: 66% of adult life healthy

Life Expectancy at Age 30

PART 2: Mechanisms

Why do individuals with more education live longer and healthier lives?

What are the causes? What are the mechanisms?
ECONOMICS: (e.g., job, income, health care)

LIFESTYLES: (e.g., smoking, exercise, alcohol)

SOCIAL: (e.g., relationships, friends, support)

COGNITIVE: (e.g., information processing, reasoning skills)

PHYSIOLOGICAL

Education → Healthy life expectancy

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PART 3: A Life Span View

Childhood environment → Educational attainment → Healthy life expectancy

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Healthy Life Expectancy

Number of Childhood Adversities

Healthy LE at age 50

PART 4: Summary

• Educational attainment is one of the strongest predictors of how long, \textit{and especially how healthy}, we live

• Education may alleviate the health consequences of being raised in adverse circumstances

• Weight of the evidence suggests that raising education levels is an important strategy for improving population health

• This evidence is made possible by federal investments in data collections and surveys, such as:
  • Current Population Survey, National Longitudinal Mortality Study, National Health Interview Survey, Health and Retirement Study