

Social Inequalities in Health and their Determinants

Abstract:

Health inequalities emerge in the intersection between social structures, individual actions and biological processes. While disease and premature mortality ultimately are biological phenomena taking place in individual bodies, social inequalities in ill health, disease and mortality are caused by socially determined conditions and processes of social inequality and stratification. Recently there has been a strong increase in the interest for health inequalities and how to tackle these, both among policymakers and in academia. A key element in this wave of interest is social determinants, in particular represented in the first report by the WHO Commission on Social Determinants in Health led by Michael Marmot (WHO 2008). Therefore, we suggest a ESS-wave, which can establish a comprehensive and comparative pan-European data set on the social determinants of health and health inequalities. The data will be used to compare the influence of different European policy regimes and to test theories of health and health inequalities for a range of health outcomes. More specifically, we suggest a wave which includes a range of health measurements (mental health, BMI, self-reported diagnoses) and social determinants (childhood conditions, working environments, psychosocial factors, and lifestyle factors).

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