

IS WEALTH THE KEY TO BETTER HEALTH? RETHINKING THE ASSUMPTION THAT RICHER PEOPLE ARE HEALTHIER

Kittisak WONGMAHESAK¹, Natthawut RUNGWONG² and Boyapati RAMANARAYANA³

1 North Bangkok University, Thailand; Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang, Indonesia; Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia; Shinawatra University, Thailand; kittisak.wongmahesak@gmail.com

2 North Bangkok University, Thailand; nattawutroongwong@gmail.com

3 Sibar Institute of Dental Sciences, India; dr.ramanarayana@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The belief that wealth is a direct pathway to better health has long been a cornerstone of socioeconomic discourse. This review critically examines the assumption that wealthier individuals invariably experience superior health outcomes, analyzing literature from the past two decades to dissect the complex relationship between economic status and well-being. While wealth undoubtedly provides access to resources such as quality healthcare, nutritious food, and safer environments, the narrative is far from straightforward. We explore how socioeconomic factors, including education, social capital, and community environment, mediate the influence of wealth on both physical and mental health. Furthermore, the review delves into the impacts of wealth inequality, revealing how disparities in economic distribution can undermine overall health outcomes, even within affluent societies. Psychological dimensions, such as stress related to financial insecurity and perceptions of social status, are also considered. Ultimately, this synthesis calls for a reevaluation of simplistic assumptions, advocating for comprehensive public health strategies that address wealth inequality alongside individual economic status to foster equitable health outcomes across all socioeconomic strata.

Keywords: Wealth, Wealth Inequality, Mental Health, Physical Health, Health Disparities

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