



MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

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Study finds education level a predictor of early mortality
Mortality rates decline as education level rises

A recent study conducted by Multnomah County Health Department found significantly higher mortality rates in areas with low education levels, compared to areas with high education levels. Researchers conducted an area-based analysis, combining mortality data with education data from the 2000 US Census.

Findings included:

- Among people living in areas with the lowest education levels, the mortality rate was 1,051 per 100,000. Rates decline as education level increases, until it reaches 745 per 100,000 in areas with the highest education levels. Those living in areas with low education levels have a mortality rate that is 1.44 times (or 44%) greater than the rate for those living in areas with high education levels.
- The premature mortality rate (deaths to those less than 65 years old) is 2½ times greater in areas with low levels of education, compared to the rate in areas with high levels of education.

Researcher Jon Duckart said, “The study looked at several other causes of death and found significant disparities by education level. The mortality rates for six causes of death – tobacco-related mortality and diabetes are two examples – were found to be over twice as high in areas with low education, compared to high education areas.”

According to Health Department Director Lillian Shirley, “We know that education levels dictate future earnings, and now we are finding a link to future health. The combination of school-based health centers and programs to keep kids in school should help to improve the odds for the next generation.”

The full report is available online at:

<http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/health/hra/haq.shtml>

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