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Educational Attainment, Sex, and Socioeconomic Status in the Context of Aging

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Abstract

Education is a known protective factor for normal aging. People who are able to pursue higher education are less likely to experience abnormal cognitive decline as they age (Lövdén et al., 2020). Socioeconomic status (SES) may also have an impact on sustained brain function. Greater wealth leads to greater opportunities for cognitive, social, and physical growth and maintenance (Steptoe and Zaninotto, 2020). Sex is another factor impacting SES and education. Females tend to have lower levels of education due to many sociocultural factors, including geographical location as well as family expectations (Hendrick et al., 2016). Therefore, we hypothesized that higher SES will lead to higher educational attainment, being male will lead to higher educational attainment, females with low SES will have the lowest educational attainment, and males with high SES will have the highest educational attainment. This study's data came from mySidewalk, which collects and organizes health data for the community. We obtained median household income and male/female educational attainment variables from the database. Results revealed that higher SES will lead to higher educational attainment and being male will lead to higher educational attainment. The other hypotheses were not supported; further research needs to be done to better understand sex differences in relation to education. Education is correlated with income, indicating that SES may be a factor for healthy aging as well. These results can help us target specific populations in order to give them the best resources for healthy aging.