

Title: The moderating influence of social capital on health care utilization: a Danish cohort study with emphasis on poor mental health.

Preferred type of presentation: Primarily an oral presentation, secondly a poster presentation.

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Keywords: *"Social Capital" "Health Care Utilization" "Quantitative research" "Mental Health"*.

Background:

The utilization of health care services (HCU) is one of the pathways for which social capital might influence health. Current evidence regarding the complex relationship between social capital and HCU is inconclusive and warrants further research. In this study, data from a large Danish survey linked to administrative registers, will be performed to explore whether high social capital is associated with an increased rate of HCU. An initiative, promoting social capital amongst persons with poor mental health, is currently being implemented by the municipality of Aalborg. Additional subgroup and sociodemographic analysis will be performed to provide data for this initiative.

Method:

The study sample originates from residents of the Region of Nordjylland (RN) participating in the North Denmark Regional Health Profile 2010 (SP2010). RN initially sampled 37.500 persons and experienced a response rate of 65.5%, thus this study is based on data from 23.392 respondents. Due to the unique civil registration number (CPR) assigned to every Dane, the cohort is trackable through the Danish national health insurance database to estimate the HCU over 3 years. This study will use the items and scales suggested by Ejlskov et al. to operationalize social capital. Furthermore, the mental health scale included in SF12 will be used to identify a subgroup with poor mental health; the main analysis along with an extensive sociodemographic analysis will be performed on this group. HCU will be measured as the frequency of contact with a general practitioner (GP) during the follow-up.

To investigate the association a two-part regression model will be used. The first part will model a binary outcome, measured as contact with a GP or no contact. The second model will estimate the association between social capital and frequency of contact for those that seek initial contact.

Results:

The results are not yet available.

Implications:

If a statistically significant, and strong, association between social capital and health care utilization is found, this may prove to be a point of intervention relevant to policy makers. The socio-demographic analysis is undertaken to provide data to the “ABC for mentalt helbred” initiative currently being implemented in Aalborg Kommune.

Key references:

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