

How Parental Education Levels Affect Health Outcomes in Children < 5 Years Old

by Tanvi A. Sharma

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between education levels of parents and the health outcomes of their children. This research was conducted in the Under 5s Clinic at Magbenteh Community Hospital in Makeni, Sierra Leone. Consent forms and surveys were administered to the parents to gather data about their educational background, the size of their household, and their use of malaria prevention practices. The heights, weights, and illness diagnosed were also recorded. Using the Spearman's Rank Correlation and the Mann-Whitney U test, the researchers examined the relationship between the health outcomes, including malnutrition metrics and illnesses diagnosed. It was found that children who were not diagnosed with any illness were more likely to have parents with a higher education level ($U = 1629, p = .002$). In addition, when considering malaria diagnoses only, children who were not diagnosed with malaria were more likely to have parents with a higher educational status ($U = 1474, p = .002$). However, there was no correlation between children diagnosed with diseases other than malaria and the educational status of their parents ($U = 1090, p = .188$). In addition, there was a mild positive correlation between the educational status of parents and weight-to-age ($\rho = .172, p = .034$) and weight-to-height Z-scores of children ($\rho = .235, p = .004$). However, there was no correlation between the parental educational status and height-to-age (stunting) Z-scores ($\rho = .038, p = .648$).