Socio-economic Status and Health in Women
Population-based studies with emphasis on lifestyle and cardiovascular health
by
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ABSTRACT

The aim was to investigate socio-economic status in relation to morbidity and mortality, in particular cardiovascular disease among Swedish women using a population based study from Göteborg. The secondary aim was to explore potential mechanisms such as dental status that may link socio-economic status to health.

Samples: The Population Study of Women in Gothenburg Sweden was begun in 1968-69. A representative sample of 1,622 women was selected according to date of birth and within the strata 38, 46, 50, 54, and 60 years of age; the participation rate in 1968 was 90 percent.

Main results: High socio-economic status was associated with a decreased risk for cardiovascular disease [RR 0.49; CI 0.24 – 0.99] in middle aged women independently of risk factors such as smoking and obesity. Number of missing teeth, a proxy for cumulative lifetime oral infection, was associated with an increased risk for cardiovascular disease in women independently of the husband’s occupational category, income, educational level, and social status of origin.

Conclusions: In conclusion, evidence of opposing monotonic trends was seen for mortality from cardiovascular disease and cancer in relation to socio-economic status. In addition, statistically significant associations were noted between tooth loss and cardiovascular disease but not cancer. However, the extent to which this relation reflects a direct causal link between dental status and cardiovascular disease remains uncertain.

Key words: cardiovascular disease, dental health, epidemiology, women, socio-economic status.

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

The thesis is based on the following two articles that are referred to throughout the thesis by their roman numerals.


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