

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON THE PREVALENCE OF ILLNESSES OF RESPIRATORY SYSTEM IN CHILDREN

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Numerous studies indicate that the major health problem in children are illnesses of the respiratory system. Family social conditions and environmental factors in the pathogenesis of diseases are more and more often underlain in reports. The aim of the present study was to determine whether socio-economic factors are related to child morbidity and whether the frequency of infections of the upper and lower respiratory tract among children is associated with their tempo of growth. The data came from a cross-sectional survey on 119 girls and 106 boys, aged 9-10 years, who attained primary school in Opole, Poland. The rate of biological development was evaluated using height and height to weight proportion. BMI was calculated. The socio-economic status and child morbidity were assessed based on the information given by parents. Statistical analysis of the material was conducted using a Chi² test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that illnesses of the respiratory system are more frequent among children from families with a low socio-economic status. The education level of the mother was most strongly related to the prevalence of the diseases analyzed. Frequency of infections of the respiratory tract in the children whose mothers had primary or vocational education was more than twice as common as that in the children whose mothers have a university education. No significant association was found between increased morbidity and the tempo of growth, but children who are frequently ill, on average, are shorter and fatter than other children. The findings suggest a diverse health knowledge and health behaviors among socio-economic groups. This diversity demonstrates the importance of health education and promotion, especially in people with a lower educational level.