

Social Stratification and Health Disparities

Abstract

Food insecurity is one of the leading health and nutrition issues in the U.S. The FDA defines food insecurity as the inability to purchase or have access to healthy, quality foods. Factors such as income, no healthcare, poverty, or rising costs in housing are a few sources of this national issue. Poverty is a global issue and is almost inevitable in every country. This study views the relationship between income and overall health.

Background

- Income influences health behaviors such as diet, exercise, and substance use.
- Higher-income individuals typically have better access to healthcare services
- Food price increases, drought, or the demand for jobs play a role in income and health
- Income is intertwined with other social determinants of health, such as education, employment, and housing
- Socioeconomic status, including income level, affects living conditions and exposure to environmental hazards.

Theoretical Argument

Income and health has been recognized as a fundamental aspect of public health research and policy. This relationship, often referred to as the socioeconomic status on individual and population health outcomes. In this theoretical argument, we delve into the multifaceted nature of this relationship, exploring the pathways through which income influences health and vice versa.

Hypotheses

Higher income is positively correlated with better health outcomes, as individuals with greater financial resources have increased access to healthcare services, healthier lifestyle choices, and improved living conditions compared to those with lower incomes.

Income:

Table 1. Frequency of Income for Sample (N=103)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below \$10,000	5	4.9	5.7
\$10,000 - \$49,999	12	11.7	19.3
\$50,000 - \$99,999	21	20.4	43.2
\$100,000 - \$149,999	22	21.4	68.2
Over \$150,000	28	27.2	100.0
Subtotal	88	85.4	
Missing	15	14.6	
Total	103	100.0	

ANOVA:

Table 2. Analysis of Variance for Income in relation to Overall Health

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Between	43.218	4	10.805	5.314	<.001
Within	168.770	83	2.033		
Total	211.989	87			

Significance level: .001

Table 3. Analysis of Variance for Income in relation to Food Purchases

Likert 1: Your food purchases have been meeting your nutritional value every week.

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Between	14.063	4	3.516	2.757	.033
Within	105.835	83	1.275		
Total	119.898	87			

Significance level: .033

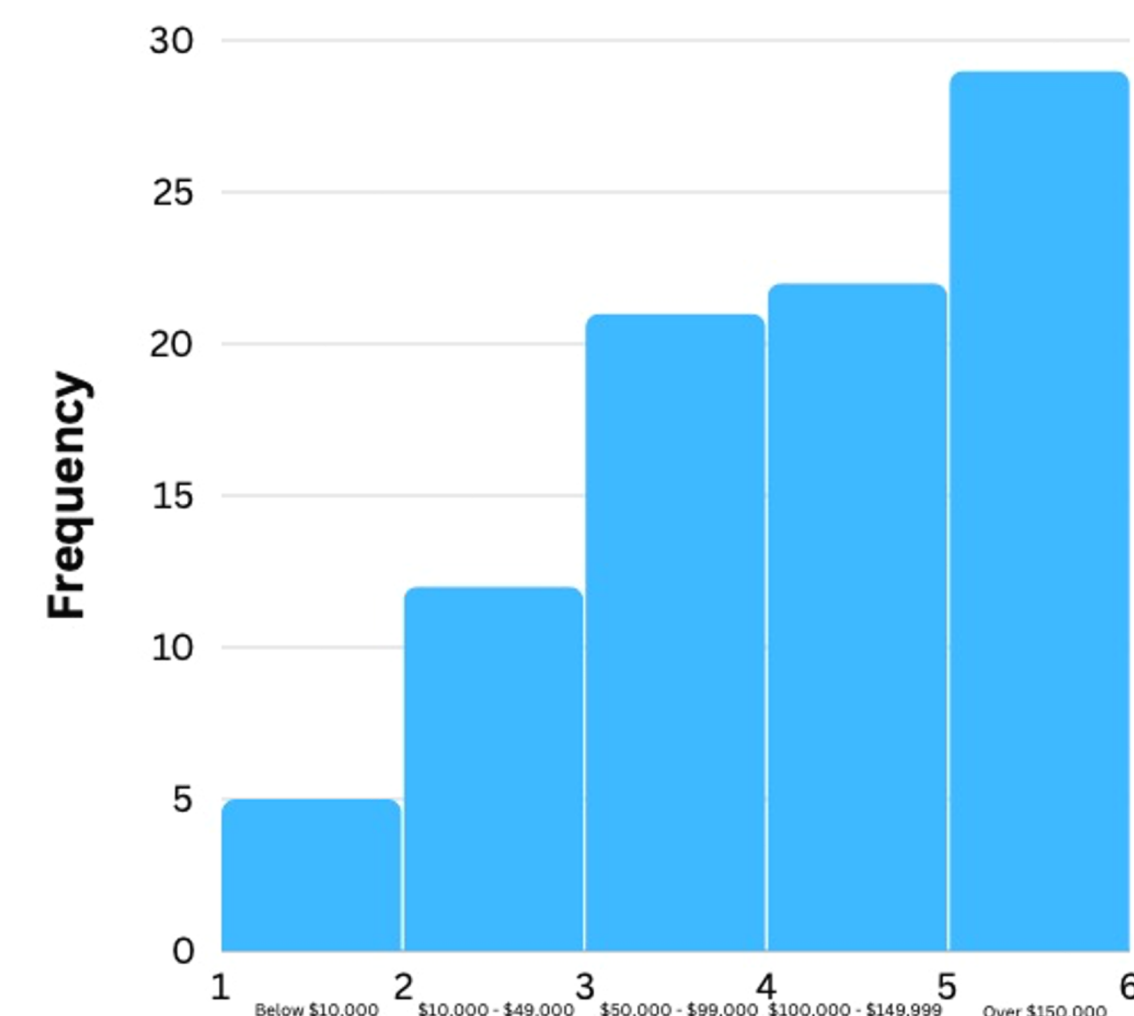
Table 4. Analysis of Variance for Income in relation to Nutrition

Likert 2: My diet has negative effects on my health.

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Between	6.051	4	1.513	.902	.467
Within	139.222	83	1.677		
Total	145.273	87			

Significance level: .467

What is your household income per year?



Methodology

For this study, Qualtrics was used for survey and data collection. There were a total of 103 respondents in the survey and was distributed mostly through social media. The variables used involve income and overall health of the respondent. To measure health more thoroughly, there are also two Likert scale questions that ask about the individual's nutrition and food purchases. These are labeled as variables as well. For measures, we used ANOVA for income to be compared with both Likert scale questions. With ANOVA, the study to find out the mean from overall health and two Likert questions compared to household income.

Results

When analyzing the univariate analysis for income, the most prominent group from the N=103 sample is 'Over \$150,000' with 27.2%. For all three analyses of variance, all p-values were below 0.05. Meaning that all values are statistically significant: (<.001), (.033), (.467). Income has been linked to overall better health and more healthier options for food purchases and nutrition.

Conclusion

The relationship between health and income is complex and multifaceted, reflecting the intricate interplay of social, economic, and environmental factors. It's evident that individuals with higher incomes tend to have better access to healthcare services, nutritious food, safe housing, and opportunities for physical activity, all of which contribute to improved health outcomes. Conversely, those with lower incomes often face barriers to accessing healthcare and healthy living conditions, leading to higher rates of chronic illnesses, shorter life expectancies, and overall poorer health. However, it's essential to recognize that income alone does not determine health outcomes.

References

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