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GAP IN HEALTH AMONG A LONG-LIVED POPULATION

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Statement of the Problem: In Sweden, the government has a platform on overall national goals for public health; to create social conditions for good health on equal terms for the entire population. The province of Halland has the highest life expectancy in Sweden. The recent health surveys in Sweden point to a noticeable better health in the county of Halland compared to Sweden as a whole. From a public health point of view, it is of interest to probe the distribution of the self-rated health among socio-demographic groups to explore if inequality in health exists even in this healthy population.

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to analyze the distribution of obesity and psychosocial health in the largest municipality in Halland compared with the average for the province as a whole.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A simple random sample of 8,429 individuals was selected from a national survey that covered all individuals in the 18–84-year age group. A postal survey was thereafter conducted (The Statistics Sweden and The Public Health Agency in Sweden). General health Questionnaire (GHQ12) and Body Mass Index (BMI) were taken in the analyses. The statistically significant socio-geographical differences in health were presented as maps using GIS-software (ArcMap 10.2). Analysis of the data was related to local key codes where densely populated areas with a higher response rate were assessed as the most statistically relevant to processing.

Finding: There were clearly significant differences in health between socio-demographically vulnerable areas and the well-off parts of the municipality. The results were adjusted for age and sex.

Conclusion and Significance: The socio-demographic disparities in health seem to exist even in a long-lived population. A better overall health situation is not likely to affect the state considerably. Recommendations for a more effective public health platform have been passed on to the politicians.

Biography

Amir Baigi has 28 years experiences in health surveys, evaluation and expertise in improving the health and wellbeing.

Anders Holmen has 30 years experiences in health and hospital care as well as supervising clinical trials by bio-statistical methods. Their scientific network extends from Gothenburg University in west to Lund University in south of Sweden.

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