



The Association Between Inaccessible Healthcare During Youth and the Development of Medical Complications Later in Life



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Introduction

- Finding a link between inaccessible medical care in a person’s youth and the health issues they develop later in life can help identify gaps in healthcare access and help policymakers and healthcare providers develop strategies to improve access to healthcare services for all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status (Alexander, 2011).
- This can lead to better health outcomes for individuals and reduce healthcare disparities (Wechsler, 2011).
- Identifying a correlation can help healthcare providers identify individuals who are at a higher risk of developing health issues later in life and intervene early to prevent or manage these health issues (Sireci, 2016).
- Early intervention can often be more effective and less expensive than treating health issues once they have progressed.

Research Questions

- Does a lack of access to medical care and resources during adolescence correlate to the development of health complications later in life?
- What is the association between limited access to medical care and resources during adolescence and the likelihood of developing health complications in adulthood?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=1,250) were drawn from the first wave of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (AddHealth), representing the adolescent population from the 1994 to 1995 school year in the United States.

Measures

- The participant’s answers were measured using the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health Wave 1 codebook, specifically through their answers to the statement “Has there been any time over the past year when you thought you should get medical care, but you did not?” Possible responses ranged from 0 (no) to 1 (yes).
- Those who answered “yes” were asked a series of questions relating to why they weren’t able to seek medical help with possible responses ranging from 0 (no) to 8 (don’t know).
- The data within Wave 5 was coded using a similar measure with 0 (no) and 1 (yes).

Results

Univariate

- 19.25% of the respondents said no to “Has there been any time over the past year when you thought you should get medical care, but you did not?” (Addhealth)
- 24.97% of the respondents said yes to “Black or African American” when answering the “What is your race? You may give more than one answer” question. (Addhealth)

Bivariate

- A Chi-square Test of Independence showed that inaccessible healthcare during youth/adolescence is insignificantly and negatively associated with the development of medical complications later in life. (P= 0.4702

Figure 1. Access to healthcare and prevalence of health issues among non-black participants

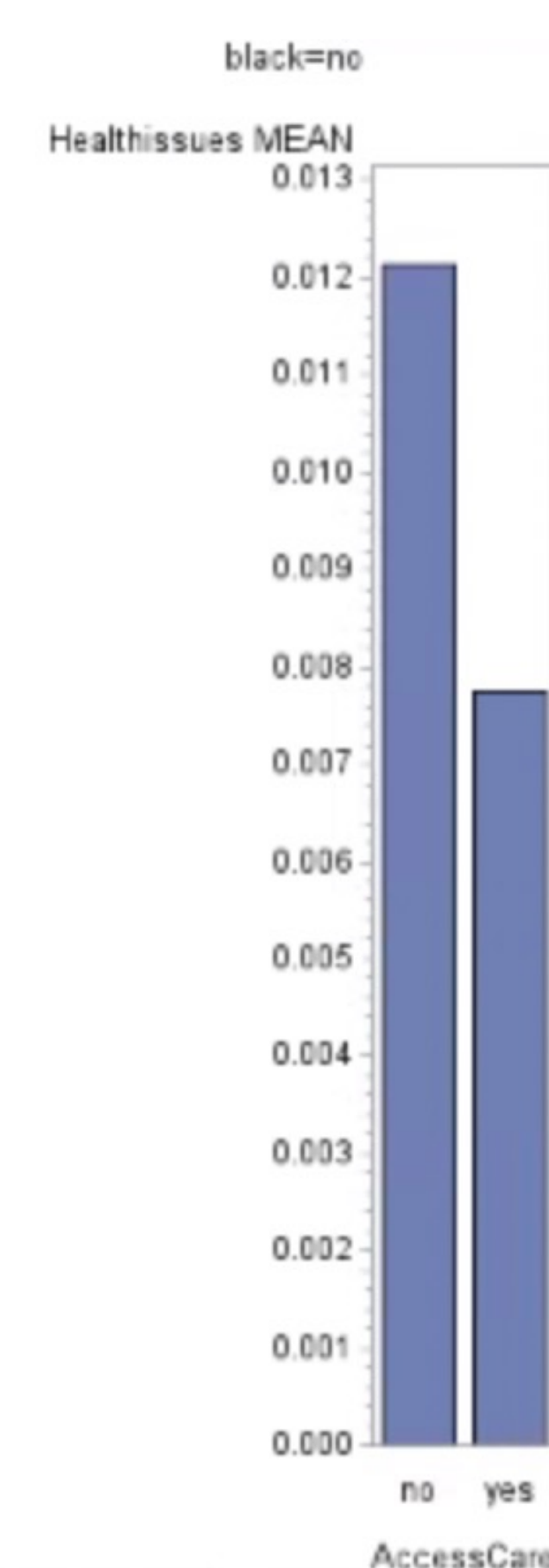


Figure 2. Access to healthcare and prevalence of health issues among black participants

Multivariate

- Race was found to be a moderator for the association between inaccessible healthcare during childhood and the development of health complications later in life(Figure 1).
- After controlling for race, inaccessible healthcare during youth seems to have a positive correlation with the development of medical conditions later in life.

Discussion

- While inaccessible health care has tangible impacts, there is not a significant relationship with the development of medical complications later in life.
- Race seems play a significant factor once a regression is done.
- Further research is needed to determine what steps should taken in terms of preventing future health complications do to an inability to benefit from healthcare during one’s childhood.