Income inequality, household income, and health status in Canada: a prospective cohort study.

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Author: Christopher B McLeod
John N Lavis
Cameron A Mustard
Greg L Stoddart

Author Affiliation: Institute for Work and Health, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. cmcleod@iwh.on.ca

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Abstract: This study sought to determine whether income inequality, household income, and their interaction are associated with health status.

Income inequality and area income measures were linked to data on household income and individual characteristics from the 1994 Canadian National Population Health Survey and to data on self-reported health status from the 1994, 1996, and 1998 survey waves.

Income inequality was not associated with health status. Low household income was consistently associated with poor health. The combination of low household income and residence in a metropolitan area with less income inequality was associated with poorer health status than was residence in an area with more income inequality.

Household income, but not income inequality, appears to explain some of the differences in health status among Canadians.

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