

Abstract

Income, Income Inequality and Life Expectancy at Birth in Thailand

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This study examines the effect of income and income inequality on life expectancy at birth in the 76 provinces of Thailand using secondary data (e.g., socio-economic characteristics, health resources) for the year 2000 that were obtained from several sources. In this study the proportion of total household income received by the less well-off 50% is used to measure income inequality, while per capita income is used to measure absolute income.

Multiple regression analysis controlling for socio-economic and health resources variables was used. Results revealed a significant association between income inequality, per capita income, and life expectancy at birth. When stratification analysis by poverty group was used, “Not Poor” provinces showed much better model specification for life expectancy at birth when either aggregated or disaggregated by sex. The effect of relative income on life expectancy at birth among the “Not Poor” and “Poor” provinces was less important compared to absolute income, which had a greater effect on life expectancy at birth than relative income. However, relative income had a reverse association with aspects of mortality, possibly due to aggregation bias or unknown sources of confounding factors.