The Wisconsin County Health Rankings: Important Determinants of Health in Wisconsin Counties

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INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin County Health Rankings

• Compiles publicly available data and ranks counties according to health outcomes (mortality and health-related quality of life) and health determinants.
• Health determinants are viewed as future predictors of health outcomes, and are divided into four components:
  - Health Care
  - Health Behaviors
  - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data
  - CDC WONDER Mortality Data
  - Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services
  - US Census Data
  - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
  - Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
  - Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance
  - US Environmental Protection Agency
  - Metastar, Inc.

METHODS

• Data were compiled from various sources, including:
  - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data
  - CDC WONDER Mortality Data
  - Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services
  - US Census Data
  - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
  - Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
  - Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance
  - US Environmental Protection Agency
  - Metastar, Inc.

• Pearson correlation coefficients were used to calculate the association between measures (Spearman coefficients are reported in the graphs of ranks)

CONCLUSIONS

SES and Health: While all four summary measures contribute to the overall Health Determinant measure, the Socioeconomic Factors component is the most strongly correlated with Health Outcomes, providing evidence for the relationship between socioeconomic status and health.

Determinants and Outcomes: The fact that the overall Health Determinant component is positively correlated with Health Outcomes provides evidence that the determinants are accurately measuring factors leading to health outcomes. However, it is possible that the effect of the Health Determinants measured in one year may not be affecting the population until later years; for example, cigarette smoking may cause mortality years after the initial exposure. This lag time in determinants affecting outcomes remains a direction for further research.

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