

Socio-Economic Demographics and Health Status of the Residents of a Hinterland Community in Negros Island, Philippines

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Background. Philippine hinterland communities face significant development barriers driven by isolation, climate vulnerability, and poverty, resulting in marked health and educational disparities compared to urban centers. To address the data gap regarding these populations, this study profiles the socioeconomic and health status of a specific Negros Island community, establishing a baseline for a proposed Health Plan.

Methods. This quantitative, descriptive-comparative study assessed the relationship between socioeconomic demographics and health status among 163 household heads in a Philippine hinterland community. Utilizing the RAND 36-Item Health Survey, the research employed descriptive analysis to outline participant profiles and comparative statistics, specifically Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests, to evaluate health differences across groups. Strict ethical standards regarding informed consent and confidentiality were maintained throughout the process.

Results. The study population, consisting primarily of older, unemployed women with low education and limited healthcare access, generally reports good physical and emotional health despite high rates of hypertension and being overweight. While daily limitations are minimal, moderate interference with social functioning persists, and specific health outcomes vary by demographic. Older age correlates with reduced physical functioning and energy, unemployment is linked to lower social functioning, lower family income is associated with poorer emotional well-being, and overweight individuals report greater role limitations due to emotional problems.

Conclusion. While socioeconomic determinants of health significantly shape outcomes, this study reveals their impact is not absolute, as individual resilience and social support can mitigate the effects of disadvantage. Therefore, effective interventions must be multi-faceted—addressing socioeconomic factors while leveraging inherent community strengths. However, these findings are constrained by the study's cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, and regional specificity. Future research should employ larger, diverse samples and objective assessments to overcome these limitations and improve generalizability.

Practical Value of the Paper. The findings offer a roadmap for improving health outcomes in Guihulngan City and similar hinterland communities by targeting interventions toward vulnerable, low-income, and unemployed populations. Effective strategies should prioritize community-based physical and mental health programs, accessible health education, and robust social support systems. Crucially, sustainable progress requires improved access to healthcare professionals and policies that address root socioeconomic drivers such as poverty, unemployment, and educational barriers.

Directions for Future Research. Future research should employ longitudinal and comparative methods to track health trajectories, evaluate program effectiveness, and explore protective factors like resilience. Simultaneously, analyzing policy gaps is essential for driving evidence-based reforms. Collectively, these efforts will clarify health determinants and foster targeted interventions for socioeconomically challenged populations, particularly in regions like Guihulngan City.

Keywords: social science, health status, health survey, descriptive-comparative, Guihulngan City, Philippines

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