

Maternal Education and Health-Related Behaviors: a preliminary analysis of the 1993 Indonesian family life survey

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Abstrak

In a number of studies of the determinants of infant and child health, maternal education emerges as perhaps the strongest socioeconomic predictor of infant and child health (Cochrane et al. 1980; Cleland and van Ginnekin 1988; United Nations 1985; Hobcraft et al. 1985). However, efforts to explain why more educated mothers have healthier children have been largely inconclusive. If maternal education alters infant and child health risks, it must affect factors directly related to health, such as nutrient intake, exposure to pathogens, susceptibility to pathogens, and two dimensions of behavior that potentially affect infant and child health and survival: knowledge and use of health services; and characteristics of the home environment that might affect the transmission of diseases. Our results demonstrate a strong relationship between maternal education and a number of health-related factors: the absence of trash and waste in the vicinity of the home, adequate ventilation, drinking and bathing water sources inside the home, electrification, ability to identify specific health problems, early use of prenatal care and delivery assistance. The relationships are robust to controls for household economic status, childhood residence, and even to very rigorous controls for residence.