

Maria Holst Algren

Title

Health behaviour in socially deprived neighbourhoods – The importance of socioeconomic status, social relations, and stress for health behaviour

Background, aim and research questions

Previous research has shown that the socioeconomic inequalities in health have widened over the recent decades. Studies have found that residents of socially deprived neighbourhoods have higher rates of unhealthy behaviour compared with the general population. Still there is limited research-based knowledge on health behaviour in socially deprived neighbourhoods in Denmark.

The aim of this PhD project is to investigate health behaviour in socially deprived neighbourhoods in Denmark and to increase the understanding of socioeconomic status, social relations, and stress for the development of social inequalities in health behaviour.

The project has three specific objectives, which are based on following research questions:

1. How is the association between socioeconomic status and health behaviour in socially deprived neighbourhoods, and is the association different than in the general Danish population?
2. How is the association between social relations and health behaviour in socially deprived neighbourhoods, and do social relations modify the association between socioeconomic status and health behaviour?
3. How is the association between stress and health behaviour in socially deprived neighbourhoods compared with the general Danish population, and do stress modify the association between socioeconomic status and health behaviour?

Methods

Initially, a literature review will be conducted to address the current knowledge within the field and identify challenges and potential to each of the three research questions.

The PhD project is based on cross-sectional data from the Deprived Neighbourhood Health Profile Survey. The survey is part of the Danish Health and Medicines Authority's (Danish: *Sundhedsstyrelsen*) project 'Forebyggelsesindsatser i nærmiljøet' [Prevention Efforts in the community] and is a part of a rate adjustment pool agreement [Danish: *Satspuljeaftale*] on health 2010-2013. Data is based on a total of 5,113 interviews (participation rate 63%) from 12 socially deprived neighbourhoods in Denmark. Data from the Danish Health and Morbidity Survey 2010 is used to compare the results from the socially deprived neighbourhoods with the general Danish population. In total, 15,165 individuals (participation rate 61%) participated in this survey.

The central statistical methodology in the project will be multiple logistic regression analysis adjusted for relevant sociodemographic indicators.

Results

The PhD project will result in four scientific papers on the basis of the project's research questions. The articles will be published in scientific peer-reviewed international journals and subsequently be assembled into the final PhD dissertation. The results will be useful to develop targeted health promotion interventions to improve health behaviour in socially deprived neighbourhoods and to reduce social inequalities in health.

Supervisors

Pernille Tanggaard Andersen, Unit for Health Promotion Research, Institute of Public Health, University of Southern Denmark.

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Time frame

1st of February 2014 to 10th of December 2017.