

## **Theme 15: Poverty and development**

### **Session 1531: Poverty and health in the life cycle**

#### **Title of the Abstract: Relationship between Poverty and Life Expectancy in China**

**Name of the Authors: Xinming Song, Lan Liu, Chengli Huang, Sanjun Chen, Guozha Hu, Yue Qiu, Lan Li**

**Institutional Affiliation and Contact Address:** Institute of Population Research, WHO Collaborating Centre on Reproductive Health and Population Science, Chinese Center on Population Health and Development (CCPHD), Peking University, Beijing 100871, China, E-mail: Xinming Song [xmsong@pku.edu.cn](mailto:xmsong@pku.edu.cn) , Lan Liu [liulan@pku.edu.cn](mailto:liulan@pku.edu.cn) , Chengli Huang [cl.huang@pku.edu.cn](mailto:cl.huang@pku.edu.cn) , Sanjun Chen [sanjun@pku.edu.cn](mailto:sanjun@pku.edu.cn) , Guozha Hu [tonisea@163.com](mailto:tonisea@163.com) , Yue Qiu [q\\_yue@126.com](mailto:q_yue@126.com) , Lan Li [muzil\\_1999@126.com](mailto:muzil_1999@126.com) , Telephone: 86-10-62759185, Fax: 86-10-62751976.

#### **Short Abstract:**

Eliminating poverty and improving life expectancy have always been a goal pursued by human society. This paper is a literature based study, using data home and abroad mainly on health and poverty. Literatures show that there is significant positive correlation between life expectancy and economic development situation, and life expectancy in poor regions is significantly shorter than in developed regions. And there are significant positive correlations between China's economic development situation and the life expectancy according to time, space or ethnic classification. National intervention is of great significance not only to the eradication of poverty, but also greatly affected the life expectancy changes. For example, imbalanced economic policies caused differences in life expectancy among different regions, and economic growth will also affect the healthy life expectancy, suggesting policies made accordingly.

#### **Extended Abstract**

##### **Background**

Understanding on poverty gradually broke through the purely economic sense, and began to enter all fields of human developments. Literatures showed that poverty means multiple deprivations which interact and enforce each other; and each aspect of the anti-poverty initiatives contribute to the improvements in other aspects.

During the past 50 years, China's GDP increased at an average annual rate of 7.7%, average life expectancy increased at an average annual growth rate of 1.42%, which has maintained a rapid and significant growth. But each area's life expectancy had increased with different extent. The increase in female life expectancy is usually slightly higher than that of their male counterparts, while there are big differences among different areas.

International Comparison shows that China's average life expectancy is relatively good among developing countries and China has achieved great success in eradicating of poverty and extending the average life expectancy.

This review will recall research on life expectancy to explore the relationship between poverty and life expectancy, analyze the impact of the current level of economic development on changes in life expectancy, and identify the differences between regions and the reasons for those differences, so as to provide the basis for decision-making and effective measurements for further economic and social development.

### **Methods (data)**

Using data used from various kinds of China statistics yearbooks, international reports and a large number of research thesis, papers and books.

The main research method in thesis is literature studies. To get idea on relationship and life expectancy, this thesis makes a comprehensive analysis and comparison on data of different time and countries. Analyses are undertaken with SPSS 11.5 (SPSS Inc.) and Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corporation).

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **(1) Overall Relationships between Poverty and Life Expectancy in China**

The increase of life expectancy in China has always been accompanied by the economic growth. For a developing country like China, the improvement of people's living standards has a very key role in the improvement of health and extension of life span.

Life expectancies and GDP per capita of different provinces have strong positive correlation in China. And life expectancies in different regions still have significant differences, which may be caused largely by the extent of poverty and economic development.

#### **(2) The ethnic differences in life expectancy**

As a multi-ethnic country, China's 56 ethnics have their own average life expectancy.

The reason may lie in differences in geographic environment, lifestyle, cultural background, economic development, education, health conditions, etc. In 1990, average life expectancy of the 55 minority was 65.16 years, achieving to the standard of developed countries' average in the late 1960s to early 1970s,

However, the minority's life expectancy does not relate with economic development as obvious as sub-regional data.

#### **(3) National Intervention**

The great achievements of modern economic development are the key to decline in the mortality rate and increase in life expectancy.

Increase life span by eradicating poverty or improving health facilities and medical conditions, will be conducive to the growth of human capital and further eradication of poverty.

National intervention has tremendous impact on poverty and life expectancy, and is the reason for differences in life expectancies among areas.

#### **(4) Regional Differences in Life Expectancy in China**

Life expectancy of the western was significantly higher than the eastern region. The differences in the level of economic development will inevitably affect the improvements of living standards and medical and health conditions of residents of the western regions,

which in turn will affect their quality of life. Accordingly provinces can be divided into 3 parts: eastern, central and western.

The average life expectancy and health status are basically accordance with the local development.

#### (5) Relationships between Regional Life Expectancy and Poverty

In some eastern areas, it shows that the effect of poverty elimination is likely to be greater for women than for men. And poverty eradication has the key role on life expectancy extension from both objective and subjective points. So poverty eradication and economic development should be conducted in a sustainable manner, and not to pollute the environment and deteriorate people's living habits.

In central areas, the average life expectancy in poor areas was shorter, and the population aged faster. These made the time of effective economic activities shortened, which affected the overall development potential of the impoverished regions.

In western areas, average life expectancy in Ningxia in 1994-2000 was lower than life expectancy of China's major urban residents in 1989, pointing out that its social, economic and health care industry need further improving.

#### (6) Life Expectancy Difference between urban and rural areas and economic development

Generally speaking, urban area has higher life expectancy than rural area, so does large city than middle and small city due to different economic development level.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

The world's practice proved that the extension of life expectancy and the eradication of poverty and economic growth are closely linked. Therefore, to promote economic development and eliminate poverty, improve human health, increase life expectancy has always been a goal pursued by human society.

A large number of studies showed that there are significant positive correlations between China's economic development situation and the life expectancy according to time, space or ethnic classification.

The national intervention is of great significance not only to the eradication of poverty, but also greatly affected the life expectancy changes. Policies to relieve poverty should be made according to different province, area and ethnic, to improve the life expectancy and health of people in China.

There are still few quantitative and comparative researches on the relationships between poverty and life expectancy. Thus this may become future research directions.

