

An analytical study to investigate the disparities in access to healthcare services across different socio-economic groups

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Abstract

This analytical research looks into discrepancies in access to healthcare services across socioeconomic groups, recognising the importance of factors like income, education, employment, and geographic location on healthcare access. Using a combination of quantitative data analysis and qualitative insights, the study investigates several aspects of healthcare access to discover underlying causes and analyse their influence on health outcomes. The findings highlight income level and physical location as main impediments, coupled with social standing and education level, whereas profession type is less significant. The presence of financial restrictions and geographical disparities highlights the critical need for tailored policies that address economic inequality, medical facilities, health education, and insurance coverage. Comprehensive methods are required to promote a universal healthcare system that is accessible to all people, regardless of their socioeconomic status or geographic location.

Keywords: Healthcare access, Socio-Economic Disparities, Income Inequality, Geographic Location, Health Outcomes, Policy Interventions, etc.

1.1 Introduction:

Healthcare availability is a critical factor influencing community health and well-being. Despite substantial advances in both medical technology and medical care delivery, gaps in healthcare access continue to be a global issue. These gaps are more prominent across socioeconomic categories, resulting in uneven medical results and continuing cycles of deprivation and sickness.

Socioeconomic status (SES) refers to a variety of criteria such as wealth, schooling, occupation, and social position, all of which affect an individual's capacity to receive and use healthcare services. Higher socioeconomic status is frequently connected with improved access to medical care, greater effectiveness of treatment, and better overall health outcomes. Individuals with lower socioeconomic status (SES) typically face challenges such as financial limits, a lack of insurance coverage, restricted access to healthcare facilities, and insufficient transportation alternatives. These impediments can result in delayed diagnosis, untreated diseases, and, eventually, worse health consequences.

Healthcare access discrepancies are a public health problem as well as an equity one. Populations with insufficient access to medical facilities are more likely to have greater rates of mortality and morbidity, which adds to overall economic and social burdens. Addressing these discrepancies is critical to ensure that everyone, regardless of socioeconomic level, has the chance to attain optimal health.

This analytical research seeks to analyse differences in access to medical care across socioeconomic categories. This study examines multiple variables of healthcare access, such as availability, price, and acceptability, in order to discover the underlying reasons of these differences and analyse their effect on health outcomes. The project will

use both statistical analyses and qualitative insights to gain a thorough knowledge of the variables that lead to uneven healthcare access.

2.1 Literature Review:

A study was conducted by Goddard, M., and Smith, P. (2001) with an objective of achieving equity of availability of health care of a number of healthcare systems. This study initially forms a generic conceptual structure within which equality of access may be investigated. It then applies the paradigm by examining how much empirical information has been used to identify systemic discrepancies in accessibility in the UK, where equal access has been a key focus of the National Health Service to its inception in 1948. Disparities across socioeconomic categories is utilised as an example, and the amount of access discrepancies is examined in five areas of assistance: medical consultations, acute hospitalisation for psychological services, precautionary healthcare promotion, and long-term care. The analysis discovers that, while there seem to be large discrepancies in accessibility to some types of medical services in the UK, the information is usually methodologically weak, making it difficult to make firm conclusions.

According to Kota, K. et al. (2022), appropriate usage of postpartum healthcare services has an important impact on the delivery and pregnancy outcomes. Maternity and infant mortality is the serious medical problem in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the least developed nations such as Togo. Furthermore, women with a college degree were more inclined to have prompt first visits to the ANC and follow adequate ANC visits compared to those with less formal education. However, rising parity and indigenous traditions, especially in rural areas, reduced access to healthcare facilities. This study revealed that economic gaps and cultural barriers impacted maternal health care usage in Togo. To reduce obstacles, women's financial autonomy and knowledge must be fostered in order to boost access and utilisation of medical services for mothers.

3.1 Research Objectives:

- To identify socio-economic factors influencing healthcare access
- To assess the extent of disparities in healthcare access.

3.2 Research Design:

In this research, descriptive research design has been used to describe the socio-economic factors influencing health care access and to describe the extent of disparities in health care access.

3.3 Data Collection and Sampling:

In the present research, primary data has been collected from 100 beneficiaries through semi-structured questionnaire. The researchers have applied convenient sampling technique to select 100 respondents.

4.1 Factors influencing health care access:

In order to study the factors influencing the ability to access the healthcare services, responses have been received from 100 beneficiaries.

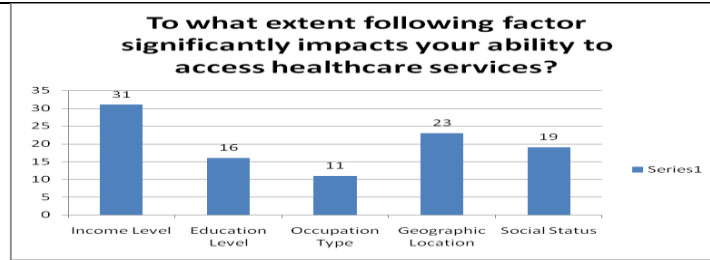


Fig. 1.1 Factors influencing health care access.

According to the findings, financial level is seen to be the most important obstacle to receiving healthcare services, with 31 respondents emphasising its importance. Geographic location was indicated by 23 respondents, indicating that where people reside has a significant impact on their access to healthcare. Social position and education level are also significant issues, with 19 and 16 respondents citing their relevance, respectively, highlighting worries about social hierarchy and health literacy. Finally, profession type, while still significant, is viewed as having the least impact, with 11 respondents recognising its effect. Overall, financial restrictions and geographical inequities are the most significant barriers to healthcare access, highlighting the need for specialised strategies to address these challenges.

4.2 Assessing gaps in healthcare access:

Assessing gaps in healthcare access involves identifying contributing variables. The responses received from 100 beneficiaries are as follows:

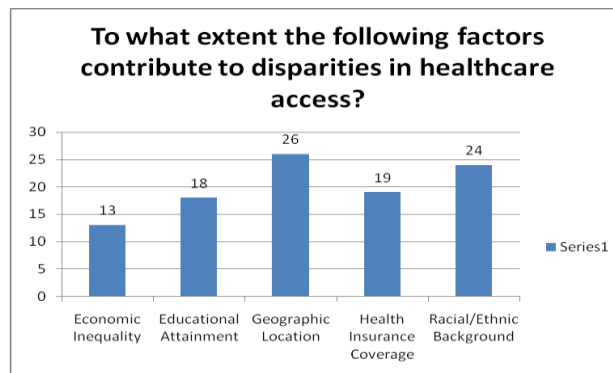


Fig. 1.2 Disparities in healthcare access

Disparities in healthcare access are caused by a range of factors, including economic difference, educational accomplishment, geographical location, medical insurance coverage, and racial or cultural origin. The evidence reveals that geographic location has the greatest influence, followed by racial/ethnic origin, educational achievement, medical insurance coverage, and economic disparity. This means that where people reside has a considerable impact on their access to healthcare services, while other characteristics such as ethnic background, education level, and insurance coverage all play a role in the discrepancies found in healthcare access. Addressing these gaps necessitates comprehensive approaches that address systemic concerns such as poverty, education, location, insurance coverage, and racial fairness in healthcare systems.

5.1 Findings and conclusions:

The data finds that financial level is the most significant barrier to access to healthcare, followed by geographical

region, social standing, and education level, with profession type having the least influence. These findings highlight the presence of financial restrictions and geographical variations in healthcare access, emphasising the need for tailored policy. Overall, tackling these disparities necessitates comprehensive strategies that address systemic issues such as income, education, geography, coverage for insurance, and ethnicity in order to ensure fair access to medical services for all people, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location.

Finally, the study identifies financial level and physical location as the most significant obstacles to healthcare access, followed by social status and education level, while profession type is less important. These findings highlight the persistence of financial restrictions and geographical differences in healthcare access, emphasising the critical need for targeted policy changes. Addressing these disparities necessitates comprehensive strategies addressing systemic issues such as income, education, geography, insurance coverage, and racial equity, which are critical for fostering an inclusive healthcare system accessible to all people, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location.

5.2 Suggestions:

To overcome the recognised obstacles to healthcare access, authorities could consider implementing targeted initiatives that reduce economic inequality, improve healthcare infrastructure in disadvantaged regions, improve health literacy programmes, and broaden health insurance coverage. Furthermore, efforts to enhance socioeconomic mobility and overcome structural biases in healthcare systems are critical. Investing in grassroots efforts healthcare services and outreach programmes can also assist to reduce gaps, ensuring that people of all socioeconomic backgrounds have equal access to excellent treatment.

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