

Cystic Fibrosis Research News

Title:

Associations between income level and health outcomes in people with cystic fibrosis in Turkey

Lay Title:

How Does Income Level Affect the Health of People with Cystic Fibrosis?

Authors:

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What was your research question?

Our research question focused on how income levels affect the health outcomes of people with cystic fibrosis (pwCF) in Turkey. Specifically, we aimed to identify the socioeconomic challenges that impact their health, including access to healthcare, nutrition, and social support.

Why is this important?

Understanding the socioeconomic challenges faced by people with Cystic Fibrosis is critical because these factors significantly impact health outcomes, treatment adherence, and overall quality of life. In Turkey, limited resources and high poverty rates compound these issues, making it difficult for many patients to access essential medical care and maintain adequate nutrition. By identifying these challenges, our study highlights the need for integrated care models that address both medical and social needs. Our findings aim to inform policy changes that could improve healthcare access, nutrition support, and social services for people with cystic fibrosis in resource-limited settings like Turkey.



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What did you do?

We conducted a study at Turkey's largest cystic fibrosis center, interviewing patients and their caregivers. Participants completed a survey assessing social and economic challenges in their daily lives. Additional questions were used to evaluate mental well-being. We examined the connections between income levels and health outcomes, such as lung health, weight, and frequency of hospitalizations. Our analysis also explored issues related to social support, food security, and financial hardships to identify the areas where patients face the most significant difficulties.

What did you find?

Our study revealed that 89% of participants lived below the poverty threshold, with 21% below the level needed to meet basic food needs. The greatest challenges were in areas of social support (68.5%), access to healthcare (62.1%), financial domain (37.9%), and food domain (37.2%). Participants with lower incomes were hospitalized more often and faced greater difficulty affording essential medications and supplies for managing cystic fibrosis. Although income level did not show a direct link to lung function or body weight, it was associated with increased stress, feelings of isolation, and chronic infections. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive support systems that address both the medical and social challenges faced by people with cystic fibrosis.

What does this mean and reasons for caution?

Our findings suggest that financial and social challenges have a major impact on the health and well-being of people with cystic fibrosis in Turkey. This highlights the need to combine social support with medical care to improve outcomes. However, our study has some limitations, like being conducted at only one center with a relatively small number of participants, which may limit how widely these findings apply. Also, since this study only looked at a single point in time, we cannot say for sure that these challenges directly cause worse health outcomes. Future research across multiple centers is needed to confirm these findings and understand how financial and social factors impact cystic fibrosis over time.

What's next?

Future research should focus on multi-center studies to validate these findings and develop policies for integrated care models that address both medical and socioeconomic needs, potentially involving collaborations with local organizations and government agencies to improve the quality of life for people with cystic fibrosis.

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