Socioeconomic Inequality in Child Survival in Albania: A Concentration-Index Decomposition of Enforced Material Deprivation and Maternal Education

Zamira Shabani *
Department of Clinical Subjects, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodër, Albania

Arketa Guli
Department of Clinical Subjects, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodër, Albania

Edona Haxhija
Department of Clinical Subjects, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodër, Albania

Elvisa Drishti
Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Economy, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodër, Albania

Abstract

Background: Maternal education and household living standards are established determinants of child survival, yet their relative contributions to the socioeconomic gradient in child mortality are rarely quantified.

Objective: We examine wealth-related inequality in child loss in Albania and decompose it into its socioeconomic and demographic components.

Design: Using the 3% public-use microdata sample of the 2011 Albanian Population and Housing Census, we studied 23,872 women aged 15 years and older who reported at least one live birth (76,408 live births).

Main Measures: Lifetime child loss was derived from the difference between children ever born and children surviving, and modelled by survey-weighted binomial logistic regression with cluster-robust standard errors. Wealth-related inequality was summarised by the Erreygers-corrected concentration index and decomposed following the Wagstaff approach.

Key Results: Child loss was concentrated among poorer households (concentration index −0.123; Erreygers-corrected −0.018), falling from 4.8% of children born in the poorest wealth quintile to 2.3% in the richest. In the fully adjusted model, the odds of child death were elevated for women with no schooling (OR 1.61) or only basic education (OR 1.45) and reduced among those owning three or more discretionary assets (OR 0.83).

Conclusions: The decomposition attributed 97% of the inequality to measured determinants, of which household living standards (45%) and maternal education (28%) together accounted for roughly three-quarters; ethnicity contributed negligibly. In a country with near-universal schooling and a European health system, the socioeconomic gradient in child survival remains built predominantly from enforced material deprivation and educational disadvantage.

Keywords

Child survival, Health inequality, Material deprivation, Maternal education, Concentration index, Albania.