

ABSTRACT

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF ASTHMA ON THE PROVISION OF EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS OF THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

This study examined the association and impact of student demographic and socio-economic measures as they relate to the student health condition of asthma and equitable educational attainment for elementary students. Students' demographic, socio-economic, academic, health, attendance records, and a health questionnaire of 694 sixth-grade students were utilized to examine the relationship and impact asthma has on student educational outcomes for students from two divergent school academic performance levels.

Using a series of chi-square tests, repeated measures of ANOVA, and a series of two-way ANOVAs, the study investigated the relationships between student demographic and socio-economic variables with the asthma health designations identified and the impact on educational outcomes of student attendance, aerobic fitness testing, and academic achievement.

This study found disparity in the prevalence and distribution of students with diagnosed asthma. More students reporting no diagnoses of asthma yet experiencing severe asthma-like symptoms were clustered within the lowest academically performing schools. These students are children of color, from lower income families, and with a primary home language other than English. The results indicated the level of asthma health symptoms could be a factor that adversely influences a student's school attendance, aerobic fitness, and academic achievement. The findings suggested impacts of undiagnosed and uncontrolled asthma symptoms only further exacerbate the disadvantages already experienced by these children.

These research findings establish the premise of asthma as a social justice issue in regards to the prevalence and impact this chronic illness has on disadvantaged students. The study recommends to adequately address the disparate prevalence and impact of undiagnosed and uncontrolled asthma within disadvantage students, schools need to move beyond traditional educational policies. Schools need to establish affirmative collaborative approaches with students, families, and community resources to improve identification and provision for appropriate treatment of asthma among all students, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Susan Cox
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