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## **EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN ALL-CAUSE AND CAUSE-SPECIFIC MORTALITY IN POLAND BETWEEN 1990 AND 2003**

### ***Abstract***

Since the beginning of the 1990s an favourable trend in mortality has been observed in Poland like in the other Central European countries. The life expectancy has risen by 4.2 years for men and by 3.7 years for women over the recent 15 years. These advantageous changes in mortality were especially intensive in middle-aged men and in older women. Almost exclusive share of the overall improvement in life expectancy was attributable to the fall in mortality due to circulatory diseases and external causes. The share of other causes of death, like cancer and digestive diseases, did not contribute to the life expectancy increase.

The purpose of the study is to assess whether all socioeconomic groups participated equally in the reduction of mortality or whether certain groups lagged behind? The analysis is focused on the changes in mortality differentials by level of education during the period of socio-economic transition in Poland. We also examine which death causes are responsible for the changes in longevity by the attained education. In order to answer the question of the causes of changes in mortality by education and gender we investigate the risk factors in male and female populations in Poland. In theoretical terms, we situate this analysis in the context of epidemiological transition theory.

This analysis was based on routine mortality statistics, census data for 1990 and 2002, and two Health Surveys: of 1996 and 2004.

The obtained results confirmed significance of the socio-economic factor on the occurrence of inequalities in mortality of men and women. At each stage of life, higher mortality is recorded among persons of lower education level. Probabilities of death are many times higher in younger and middle age groups of persons with primary and lower education levels than in those with higher education

attained. This gap still widened in the period of socio-economic transition in Poland. The observed big sex difference may be attributed to the unhealthy lifestyle, especially among middle-aged men.