Relationship Between Poverty and 5 of the 10 Leading Causes of Death in New Mexico

Examining socioeconomic disparities and their relationship with health outcomes is critical. Higher rates of poor health outcomes may be seen within populations residing in areas with lower levels of socioeconomic status, poor housing quality, and fewer overall resources. To examine this relationship census tract poverty levels were divided into 6 categories ranging from <5% to ≥40% of the federal poverty level.

Five of the 10 leading causes of death were significantly associated with census tract level poverty category and mortality. Diabetes mellitus, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, unintentional injury, and influenza and pneumonia were the leading causes of death most associated with higher poverty levels, with diabetes and chronic liver disease having the strongest relationship. The Alzheimer’s disease death rate was associated with census tracts with higher income levels.

Those living in poverty may experience food insecurity, inadequate/unhealthy housing, and poor access to health care. They are also at higher risk of experiencing -

- Disability
- Poor general health
- Poor mental health
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Chronic lung disease
- Asthma
- Obesity
- Binge drinking
- Cigarette smoking


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