

▼ POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Education and health go hand in hand

What in our lives separates us from others when it comes to longevity and quality of life?

For educators, this is an important question because for years researchers have been trying to examine the correlation between health and education.

They argue that the more educated you are, the more likely you are to lead a healthier life, which can be explained through full employment with a steady income and a rewarding career.

So the opposite is that if you are uneducated you can expect periods of unemployment, having to work at a job you don't particularly like and where your wage is prob-



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ably below average.

There are also the social-psychological resources that come with education.

This is where those who have more education feel they have more control over their lives and are generally more content.

With this sense of well being and financial resources educated people are more likely to pursue a healthier lifestyle.

People who are edu-

cated tend to get regular exercise, make sure they have medical check-ups, drink moderately and are less likely to smoke.

So why is this?

Sociologists argue that education inequality (highly educated versus less educated) sorts people into different positions in regards to risks and rewards.

For example someone with an MBA degree, making \$100,000 a year, working for a government agency in an office in downtown Kelowna would probably not consider their job very risky.

In fact, they would probably recognize that they are being rewarded for their education based on their salary and the nature of their work.

On the other hand, a high school dropout making \$15 per hour, working for a road maintenance company as a general worker, is probably not being rewarded for his education.

He most likely takes on more risk at work because he is working outside surrounded by traffic—not only could he be hit by a moving vehicle, he most likely spends his day breathing in gas and other fumes.

Now let us take this analogy a step further.

The person with the MBA probably doesn't have to worry about money too much, she is able to drive a reliable vehicle, buy groceries and live in a safe neighbourhood in a decent house.

This person's financial and educational buffer protects her from hard living and provides her with a fairly easy lifestyle—and time to exercise.

Whereas the person making \$15 an hour will struggle to support themselves, let alone a family.

This person probably lives from paycheque to paycheque and finds it difficult to pay for food and housing.

On a daily basis this person may suffer emotionally and psychologically because life is tough.

They don't have a buffer to protect them if things go wrong such as a winter layoff.

Their image of life and of the possibility of a better life is hard to fathom, therefore leading this person to adopt unhealthy behaviours (such as smoking) because there is essentially little hope.

Although this is a very simplistic analogy of how education and health go hand-in-hand, or how higher wages through education can translate in to a higher quality of life, it is something to think about especially for those who are considering whether to go to college or not.

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