

# Socioeconomic predictors over the life course of healthy ageing index in older Eastern Europeans

Martin Bobak, Maleeka Zaidi, Hynek Pikhart

## ABSTRACT

### Background and Objectives:

Eastern Europe is facing population ageing in addition to health and socioeconomic inequalities that have emerged during post-communist transition. While it is important to consider a life course approach to the socioeconomic predictors of healthy ageing, there have been very few studies exploring this association between socioeconomic position (SEP) across the life course and healthy ageing in the Eastern European context. The aim of this study was to investigate the associations between socioeconomic predictors at different stages of the life course and a composite index of healthy ageing in Eastern European ageing cohorts.

### Methods:

We used data from the prospective cohort study, HAPIEE, comprising of 24,071 individuals from random population samples from urban centres in the Czech Republic, Poland and Lithuania, aged 45-75 years at baseline in 2002-2005 in the Czech Republic and Poland and 2006-2008 in Lithuania. Self-reported SEP indicators used for analysis are childhood amenities (Childhood), education (Early Adulthood), current household amenities, residents per room per room, and deprivation scale (Late Adulthood). Logistic regression was used to investigate the association between SEP across the life course and a recently developed composite Healthy Ageing Index (HAI).

### Results:

Education showed the most pronounced association with HAI, followed by childhood amenities, current deprivation, current amenities and crowding, with some variations between countries. The odds ratios of low HAI in those with the highest vs. lowest quintile of lifecourse accumulation of low SEP was 4.3 (95% confidence interval 3.8-4.9). Odds ratios were higher in females, in participants with older age, without partner, with lower alcohol consumption, and those reporting poor self-rated health.

### Conclusion:

These results have highlighted the significance of SEP at different stages of life in determining healthy ageing. Policy makers must tackle their ageing populations through addressing inequalities across the life course, in particular educational attainment.