

4th Annual International Conference on Health Sciences,
2nd Annual International Conference on Public Health, Forum on Health Inequality,
Symposium on Diabetes, 2-5 May 2016, Athens, Greece: Abstract Book

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Changes of Health Inequalities in Space and Time in the Post-socialist Period of Hungary

The marked deterioration in the health of the Hungarian population has been going on since the middle of the 1960s. The general health status is worse than justified by the level of economic development. From 1989 essential political, economic and social changes took place in East-Central Europe as well as in Hungary. The social effects of this transformation such as the acute problems of unemployment and poverty among low-income population groups have gone together with a “health recession”. Jointly the role of the epidemiological, the demographic and the recent economic crisis have shown some unique trends in the Hungarian health indicators over recent years.

The main aim of the paper is to describe health conditions through health inequalities in Hungary, and it is still worth explaining how the health situation has changed in terms of space and time in the last 25 years. The territorial range of the paper includes the level of the Hungarian counties and micro-regions. The examined period covered by the begins of the 1990s until the year of 2012 which can give a hand to define health effects of the transition as well as the consequences of the recent crisis on health. The statistical analysis is based on the use of mortality and life expectancy indicators.

The Hungarian health indicators have been reflecting a particularly unfavourable tendency for a number of decades. The mortality statistics sadly qualify the country for the international vanguard. The unfavourable health is characterised partly by mortality and morbidity data which are outstandingly high in the international comparison, and mainly by the high occurrence of risk factors.