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Social inequalities and childhood cancer: A systematic review

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The pattern of geographic, social, economic inequalities and the access to health when it comes to cancer in adults has been reported in scientific literature. However, few investigations have synthesized evidence about the role of social determinants for the risk of death in Childhood Cancer. Kehm and collaborators, whilst studying the socioeconomic status (SSE) of the incidence of cancer in under 15-year-olds in the United States, observed positive association between the level of their mothers' education and the incidence by LLA and tumors of the central nervous system. In that same study, there was a positive association between the neighborhood's SSE and the general incidence of cancer. Otherwise, higher levels of their mothers' education were inversely associated with the incidence of hepatoblastoma. In Brazil, an ecologic study on mortality by LLA and social inequality amongst under 15-year-olds, showed us that there has been a significant decrease in the mortality in more developed states in the country between the periods of 1980 until 2002. However, they did not observe a correlation between the socioeconomic level and the change in the pattern of mortality. Another investigation that assessed the incidence by LLA and the SSE in the states of Sao Paulo concluded that children who resided in low SSE areas presented lower risks of developing LLA when compared to the ones who resided in wealthier areas. This suggests that the identification of factors that influence the standard of living, health, and the pathways in which they operate, is an important task for Public Health that could establish the bases for a reduction in inequalities.