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13 August 2015

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/70150/>
MPRA Paper No. 70150, posted 07 Jun 2016 12:10 UTC

Health inequality in the Russian Federation: An examination of the changes in concentration and achievement indices from 1994 to 2013

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Abstract:

Background: To assess and quantify the magnitude of health inequalities ascribed to socioeconomic strata from 1994 to 2013 in the Russian Federation.

Methods: A balanced sample of 1,496 adult individuals extracted from the 1994 wave of the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS) is followed for stated self-perceived health status until 2013. The socioeconomic strata (SES) index is constructed with a set of variables (adult equivalent household income, ownership of assets and living conditions) by applying principal component analysis (PCA). We use a regression-based concentration index to measure differences in self-perceived health status. Finally, we examine the degree of aversion to inequalities in self-perceived health status between the worse-off and the better-off with the achievement index.

Results: By 2013, the mean standardized self-perceived health status has improved by 4.6 % compared to 1994. The absolute size of Concentration Index (CI) for non - standardized self-perceived health status is reduced by 44.27 % from 1994 to 2013. No systematic trend emerges in the evolution of CI for self-perceived health status of the Russians over the 19 year period. However, avoidable inequalities in self-perceived health status of the Russian population is reduced by almost 60 % over the two decades (1994–2013).

Conclusion: SES, as defined with objective indicators, shows little consistency in association with self-perceived health status in the Russian Federation. This study highlights the need for future research that considers the context of stated self-perceived health status in the realm of subjective socioeconomic status (SSS).

Keywords: Achievement, Aversion, Concentration, Distributionally-sensitive, Health inequalities, Positive-externality, Self-perceived, Subjective socioeconomic status, Russia.