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## Socio-Economic Status

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### Synonyms

[Socioeconomic position](#)

### Definition

Social class is often used by social scientists when the more generic socioeconomic status or socioeconomic position is preferable. Socioeconomic status refers to particular social strata in society and can be measured at a personal or geographical level. For an individual, indicators include occupational social class, occupational prestige, educational attainment, household income, housing

tenure, household amenities, and car ownership. For a geographical area, composite measures are often derived from the characteristics of residents in a defined location (Galobardes et al. 2007).

In the context of epidemiology, socioeconomic status has been most commonly related to disease (particularly cardiovascular disease) and disease risk factors (particularly health behaviors such as smoking). Socioeconomic inequalities (variations) in health are essentially universal: with the exception of very few outcomes, poorer health is more common in poorer people. As such, reducing these differentials is a priority for many governments and health agencies.

### References and Further Reading

Galobardes, B., Lynch, J., & Davey Smith, G. (2007). Measuring socioeconomic position in health research. *British Medical Bulletin*, 81–82, 21–37.