

**A “Reverse” Gradient? Educational Attainment and
Later-life Comorbidity in China:
An Exploration for Potential Mechanisms**

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ABSTRACT

The education gradient in late-life chronic morbidity is well documented in developed countries, while findings are less consistent in developing contexts. Higher risks of diabetes, obesity, and hypertension are found among the more educated individuals in developing countries in Asia and Latin America. Using nationally representative data from the China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study (2011), this study examines the educational effect in risk of late-life chronic morbidity among the aging population 45+ in China (N=17,239). Results suggest for a “reverse” educational gradient. Compared to those with more than primary education, those with low education have an average of 16% lower odds of having any chronic disease, and 21% lower odds of having comorbidity at later-life. Such educational effect is not found for late-life functional health. In addition, the “reverse” educational gradient in chronic morbidity is not explained by late-life socioeconomic status, self-rated health, health behaviors/lifestyles, or healthcare utilization.

Updated extended abstract will be uploaded soon.