

# **Social determinants of health and health inequities in children under-five years old in Province Sindh, Pakistan: A qualitative study**

## **Abstract**

Obvious health inequities in children under-five years exist between regions, countries, and within countries. Reducing these health inequities requires attention to the unfair distribution of power, money, and resources and living conditions. This study presents a brief overview of the effects of environmental, sociocultural, economic, food insecurity, early childhood development and political determinants on child health and health inequities. A qualitative study was conducted based on 24 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 12 focus group discussions (FGDs) in poor-urban and poor-rural settings. There are health inequities existing in children under-five years in the study area, among which poverty, food insecurity, lack of health facilities and sociocultural practices have the largest contribution in both poor-urban and poor-rural areas, while environmental pollution and poor sanitation conditions in poor-urban areas. Our results show that in study areas (urban and rural), children from the poorest households stand greater risk to be ill due to identified social determinants and inequities, than their counterparts in the most privileged areas. In conclusion, our approach must be proactive, collaborative, inclusive, and deliberate as we advance the use of a social determinants approach to reducing health inequities among and between populations.

**Key Words:** Social, Determinants, Child, Health, Equity, Inequities, Urban, Rural