Greater Education Reduces HIV Risk

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Additional years of secondary schooling reduce the risk of HIV infection, especially for girls. Publishing their findings in The Lancet Global Health, researchers conducted a “natural experiment” examining the effects of greater levels of education in Botswana.

This research was made possible because the sub-Saharan African nation passed an education reform measure in 1996 that made it easier for children to complete 10 years of education. The researchers analyzed data from about 7,000 people who participated in the Botswana AIDS Impact Surveys and compared cohorts who entered secondary school—defined as grades eight through 12—before 1996 with those who began it after.

The investigators found that additional years of secondary schooling were associated with a reduced risk of HIV. This was particularly true among women, for whom each extra year of school reduced their risk of contracting the virus by 12 percentage points. These benefits did not apply to those who had less than nine years of education.

To read the press release, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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