

Application of a simple methodological approach to analyze health inequalities: The case of infant mortality in Chile Aplicación de una aproximación metodológica simple para el análisis de las desigualdades: El caso de la mortalidad infantil en Chile

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Background: The infant mortality gradient by maternal education is a good indicator of the health impact of the social inequalities that prevail in Chile. Aim: To propose a systematic method of analysis, using simple epidemiological measures, for the comparison of differential health risks between social groups that change over time. Material and Methods: Data and statistics on births and infant deaths, obtained from the Ministry of Health, were used. Five strata of maternal schooling were defined and various measures were calculated to compare infant mortality, according to maternal education in the periods 1998-2001 and 2001-2003. Results: Of particular interest is the distinction between a measure of effect, Relative Risk (RR), which indicates the size of the gap between socioeconomic extremes and the etiological strength of low maternal schooling on infant mortality, and a measure of global impact, the Population Attributable Risk (PAR%), which takes into account the whole socioeco