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## Trends in educational mortality differentials in Austria between 1981/82 and 2001/2002

### A study based on a linkage of census data and death certificates

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VOLUME 19 - ARTICLE 51

PAGES 1759 - 1780

Date Received: 7 Feb 2008

Date Published: 2 Oct 2008

<http://www.demographic-research.org/volumes/vol19/51/>

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#### Abstract

Background -- Many studies for European populations found an increase in socio-economic mortality differentials during the last decades of the 20th century, at least in relative terms. The aim of our paper is to explore the situation in Austria, for a wide age range, over a period of 20 years. Methods -- Based on a linkage of census information and death certificates, we computed age and education specific death rates. We calculate life expectancies at age 35 by educational level as well as regression-based measures of absolute (SII) and relative (RII) inequality, for the periods 1981/82, 1991/92, and 2001/2002. Results -- Life expectancy increased faster for the higher educated in the 1980s, whereas this trend reversed in the following decade. For males at working ages an increase in relative mortality differentials was observed during the 1980s. Absolute mortality differentials decreased among elderly females in the 1990s, particularly for circulatory disease mortality. Altogether the educational pattern of mortality was rather stable in Austria at the end of the 20th century. Conclusions -- Compared with results from other countries, trends in educational mortality differentials seem to be rather favorable in Austria in the 1990s. A stable health care system, the healthy migrant effect, and relatively low unemployment rates may have contributed to stable mortality differentials. However, an important explanation is also the inclusion of higher ages in our study

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#### Keywords

[Austria](#), [education](#), [mortality](#), [trends](#)

#### Word count (Main text)

3680

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