

Association between socioeconomic position and depression and suicidal ideation in low- and middle-income countries in Southeast Asia: a systematic review

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BACKGROUND



Mental disorders contribute to a significant burden of disease worldwide, particularly in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs)



Socioeconomic position (SEP) is a known risk factor for mental health, but the vast majority of evidence supporting this is from high-income settings



This systematic review aimed to synthesise the evidence for the associations between SEP and depression or suicidal ideation in LMICs in Southeast Asia

METHODS

- Searched **four databases** in February 2023 (Medline, Embase, PsycInfo and Web of Science), grey literature and reference searching of included papers
- Papers were included if they were **based in a Southeast Asian LMIC** general or hospital populations (**≥16 years of age**) and explored at least one **measure of SEP** in association with **depression or suicidal ideation**
- Study quality was assessed using the **Joanna Briggs Institute** tool. A meta-analysis and narrative synthesis were performed

RESULTS



59 papers from 6 LMICs in Southeast Asia

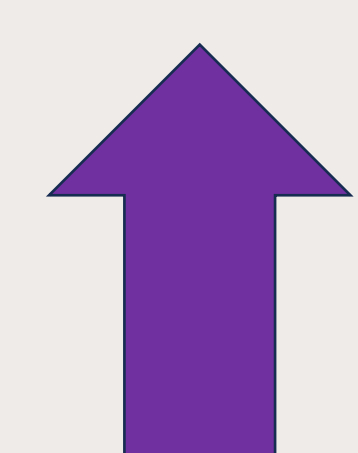


Most of the papers reported on depression (95%), with three investigating suicidal ideation



29 papers rated as higher quality, all studying depression. No paper exploring suicidal ideation was rated as higher quality

Depression:



- Lower levels of education
- Unemployed/not working
- In financial difficulty
- Poorer subjective economic status

Increased odds



- Occupation
- Income
- Composite measures
- Asset ownership

Unclear association

Suicidal Ideation:



Too few studies to make definitive conclusions



Lower education was consistently associated with higher odds of suicidal ideation, but sometimes supported by weak evidence

CONCLUSIONS



We found evidence that lower SEP increases the likelihood of depression in Southeast Asian LMICs, with some indication of this association with suicidal ideation

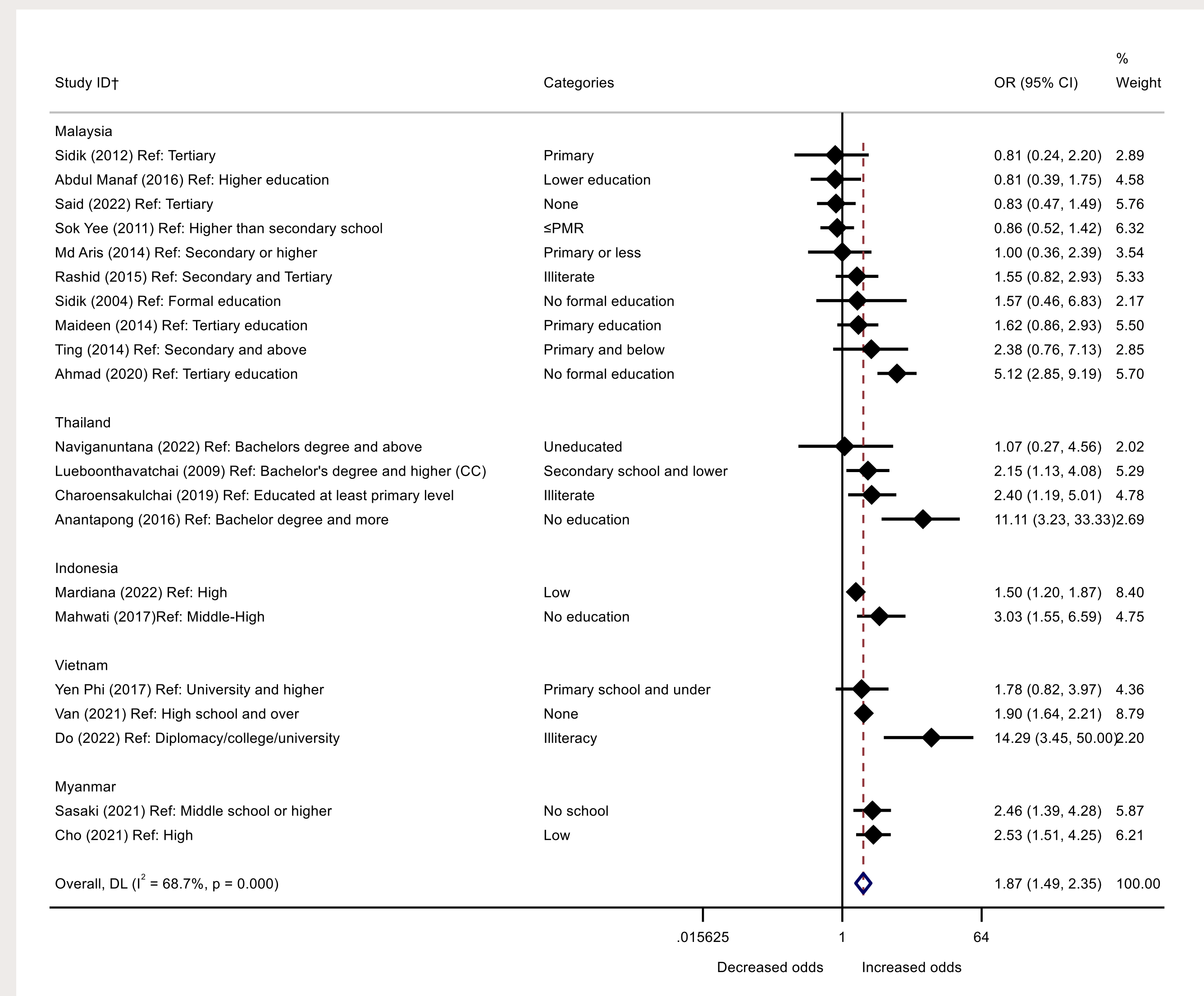


Our review highlights the need for additional research exploring SEP in relation to depression and suicidal ideation in all LMIC in Southeast Asia



More work is needed to ensure tools used for identification of poor mental health are validated in the relevant settings before use of them in epidemiological studies

Meta-analysis of education and depression



Meta-analysis of working status and depression

