



Bayer AG
Communications
51368 Leverkusen
Germany
Phone +49 214 30-1
www.bayer.com/en/media

News Release

Comprehensive Review of More Than 400 Studies Conducted Over 30 Years:

New Publication Reveals the Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Health Outcomes and Importance of Self-Care

- For low-income populations, self-care is often the first, and sometimes only option to manage many health conditions, yet it is often overlooked by healthcare providers, policy makers and governments
 - The study highlights determinants such as pollution exposure, education level and lifestyle which can have a major impact on disease burden and health outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations
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Basel, Switzerland, March 25, 2025 – The use of self-care to address unmet medical needs could transform how vulnerable populations access treatment and knowledge, while reducing the burden on healthcare systems, according to a [recently published](#) study by Bayer's Research Initiative for Self-Care Equity (RISE).

The research – which is one of the most comprehensive studies of its kind – reviewed over 400 studies across different therapy areas conducted over the past 30 years, with data from 80 countries across the economic spectrum.

This extensive work assessed numerous socioeconomic factors impacting health – ranging from lifestyle and demographic to environmental and social – across the therapy areas where self-care solutions are commonly used (allergic diseases, upper respiratory infections, pain, women's intimate health, digestive disorders, nutritional deficiencies and cardiovascular disease).

"This study shines a renewed light on a global problem we must confront; that health is a story of the haves and the have-nots. It doesn't have to be this way," said Julio Triana,

President of the Consumer Health division of Bayer. “We have the tools to ensure everyone on the planet has access to better health. This eye-opening review of some of the key factors impacting the health of underserved people can help us address these challenges through innovative approaches that expand the use and practice of quality self-care.”

The Consumer Health division of Bayer recently announced its new vision to enable billions of people to live healthier lives through the most trusted self-care solutions. The medical insights from the study are intended to support this vision by driving conversations about policy changes that can support greater access to self-care as well as informing new product development to meet the unique needs of low-income populations.

Some key examples include:

- **Allergy:** Allergic diseases such as asthma, allergic rhinitis and eczema affect 34% of the global population but have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations through exposure to higher levels of air pollution and poor housing conditions. Policy changes and advocacy can establish legally enabling frameworks, and access to relevant resources and tools will empower people to improve living conditions.
- **Body pain:** Evidence indicates that individuals with less formal education and people with blue collar jobs are more likely to suffer from pain, experience more severe pain, and have greater disability as a result. Incidents of pain compound impacts – for example, it leads to more loss of work and unrealized wages, which further perpetuates the cycle of economic disadvantage.
- **Women’s intimate health:** Women with lower education levels are at an increased risk of vaginal infections, when if left untreated can cause cervicitis, leading to things like infertility in non-pregnant women, and premature birth in pregnant women. By diagnosing and treating vaginal infections early on, particularly during pregnancy in underserved women, we can transform health in a way that spans generations.

- **Generational impact:** Significant risk for poor health is determined by maternal and paternal health and behaviors. For example, in India, a child born to a father who uses any type of addictive substance (tobacco/alcohol) has a 2x greater risk of malnutrition. The risks that we see across these disease areas are additive, and the health of one generation is passed on to the next.

Self-care options to reduce health inequalities

Shifting decision-making to individuals presents a unique opportunity to empower self-care and enhance health system efficiency. However, to maximize impact and ensure equity, it is critical to concurrently strengthen support mechanisms that mitigate socio-economic disparities. Strategic investments in self-care can accelerate progress toward accessible, sustainable healthcare solutions, making it a pragmatic and essential area for global health investment.

“Access to health is a fundamental right that requires collaboration and unwavering commitment from all stakeholders,” said Emese Csoke, Global Medical Access lead, Consumer Health division of Bayer and lead author of RISE. “By addressing health inequalities, we can bridge the gap and ensure equitable health outcomes for everyone. This research highlights the importance of self-care in achieving health equity and calls for responsible and collective action.”

Dr. Mike Reid, study author and Associate Professor, Institute for Global Health Sciences, University of California, San Francisco, said, “Health disparities are often driven by where you live, what you earn, and the opportunities you have. This research underscores the urgent need to embed self-care into broader health system strengthening efforts — because when people are given the tools and knowledge to manage their health, we see improvements not just in individual well-being but in entire communities.”

Full study [accessible here](#).

About RISE

RISE is a pioneering research initiative designed to advance self-care and health equity. It is a comprehensive review of over 400 studies conducted over 30 years. RISE empowers people, caregivers, and healthcare professionals by integrating research, innovative solutions, policy advocacy, and community engagement to make quality healthcare more

accessible. With a strong focus on individual empowerment and sustainable health practices, RISE embodies Bayer's commitment to enabling billions of people to live healthier lives through trusted self-care.

About Bayer

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the life science fields of health care and nutrition. In line with its mission, "Health for all, Hunger for none," the company's products and services are designed to help people and the planet thrive by supporting efforts to master the major challenges presented by a growing and aging global population. Bayer is committed to driving sustainable development and generating a positive impact with its businesses. At the same time, the Group aims to increase its earning power and create value through innovation and growth. The Bayer brand stands for trust, reliability and quality throughout the world. In fiscal 2024, the Group employed around 93,000 people and had sales of 46.6 billion euros. R&D expenses amounted to 6.2 billion euros. For more information, go to www.bayer.com.

Contact for media inquiries:

Jeffrey Donald, phone +41 79 907 7111

Email: jeffrey.donald@bayer.com

Find more information at www.bayer.com.

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