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Health and Well-Being in Udaipur and South Africa

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Health and wealth are two of the most important components of well-being. Rankings of well-being based on income or on health alone will differ from more comprehensive rankings, depending on the way that income and health are related. Strong causal links run in both directions between income and health, as well as through third factors, so that we cannot hope to understand one without understanding both. The availability of purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates allows relatively sound comparisons of income across countries, while some dimensions of population health—particularly life expectancy, mortality rates of infants and children, and anthropometric measures—are also straightforward to compare across countries. Consequently, much of the research on international health and income has focused on the cross-country relationships between population health and national income. Starting from Preston (1975, 1980), these relationships have been used to investigate the causes of mortality decline, particularly the relative roles of income and of medical knowledge. And data on adult height have been used to investigate the causes of the historical decline in mortality (see, in particular, Fogel 1997, 2004; Floud, Wachter, and Gregory 1990; and Steckel 1995).

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The Commission for Macroeconomics and Health (World Health Organization 2001) used the same data to argue that it is health care, acting through health status, that is an important engine of economic growth. Another strand of research, particularly associated with Amartya Sen, for example, Sen (1999), and embodied, for example, in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index, argues that cross-country comparisons of well-being must look at health (and education) together with national income. And Becker, Philipson, and Soares (2005) have recently argued that if national income is extended to include the value of years lived, "extended" national incomes, unlike national incomes, are converging across countries so that international inequality is decreasing, at least on a between-country-level basis and according to their specific measure.

International comparisons of the link between health and income using data on individuals are more difficult than those using populations, if only because many nonfatal measures of health are not obviously comparable from place to place. Another difficulty is that, until relatively recently, surveys that collect information on income rarely collect comprehensive information on health, while most standardized health surveys, the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) being the most notable examples, contain at best rudimentary and unsatisfactory information on economic status. Even so, and following Filmer and Pritchett (2001), the information on ownership of durable goods in the DHS surveys has been widely used to construct principal component indexes, often referred to as "wealth" or "income," that have been used to document the link between various measures of health and "wealth" across many countries using the DHS surveys. But because the indexes are computed independently for each country, because the list of goods included differs from country to country, and because the relationship between the index and actual wealth or actual income cannot be documented in the absence of wealth or income data, these results, useful although they are, tell us very little about the relationship between income and health either within or between countries.

In this paper, we present largely descriptive results from three field sites in India and South Africa. We report direct comparisons of a number of objective and subjective measures of economic and health status in the sites, one in the district of Udaipur in rural Rajasthan; one in the shack township of Khayelitsha near Cape Town; and one in the demographic surveillance site of Agincourt, Limpopo Province, a rural area that was once part of a Bantustan in apartheid South Africa. We are ultimately interested in improving our ability to make comparisons of well-being across such places, using both economic and health measures. We are also concerned with the relationship between income and health and, in particular, with the fundamentalist "wealthier is healthier" hypothesis that health automatically follows economic development, within and across countries. Al-

though the term comes from the title of a paper by Pritchett and Summers (1996), who indeed argued that it was income, not health care, that determined population health, the idea that income, through better nutrition, clothing, and housing, was the primary determinant of health in the history of now rich countries was argued by McKeown (1979), and, more recently and in more detail and with more nuance, by Fogel (1997, 2004). While these historical views have been convincingly challenged, most notably by Szreter (1988), Guha (1994), Preston (1996), and Easterlin (2004), the argument that economic growth is automatically good for health remains widely accepted, particularly among those arguing for the benefits of globalization; see, for example, Dollar (2001) and World Bank (2002). If the "wealthier is healthier" hypothesis is *not* true, economic growth needs to be supplemented by appropriate public and private action to directly improve population health, independently of whether better health promotes better economic levels of living.

The paper is laid out as follows. Section 9.1 provides a brief background on levels and trends in population health and income in India and South Africa within the broad context of levels and trends in international health. Section 9.2 describes our three field sites and documents various dimensions of their health and economic status. Section 9.3 analyzes the correlates of health and well-being in our sites. Our results show that the economically better-off South Africans are healthier in some respects, but not in others. They are taller and heavier, but their self-assessed health is no better; they suffer from depression and anxiety to about the same degree; they have a remarkably similar pattern of prevalence of various health conditions; and both adults and children in South Africa, particularly in the urban site, are more likely to go without food for lack of money. Even if some of the self-reported deprivations, such as hunger, are assessed relative to different local expectations, the effects on anxiety and mental health appear to be absolute and absolutely comparable. Because health, like well-being, is multidimensional, and because the components of health do not correlate perfectly with one another, nor with income-based measures, income on its own is likely to be misleading as a short-cut measures of international health. Even within places, such as the three examined here, the links between health and wealth are far from universally strong.

9.1 Population Health in India and South Africa

Figure 9.1 reports the familiar Preston curve for 2000, with life expectancy at birth plotted against gross domestic product (GDP) per capita measured in (current) purchasing power parity (PPP) dollars. The United States is the richest country shown (Luxembourg is excluded, and would appear far to the right), but has lower life expectancy than most of the other rich countries. India, with per capita income of \$2,045 in 2000, is a

Fig. 9.1 The Preston curve in 2000
Sources: World Bank and Penn World Table.

little below the "hinge" of the Preston curve, the point at which there is a sharp fall in the slope of the regression function and that is often identified as the point where countries cross the epidemiological transition, from infectious to chronic disease, and from childhood to old age mortality. South Africa, like several other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, lies far below the Preston curve. Together with falling life expectancy in the countries of the former Soviet Union, South Africa and its neighbors have caused the "dent" in the Preston curve just above the "hinge," a feature that was not present in earlier curves.

Figure 9.2 shows the evolution of the Preston curves by decade from 1960. India has made steady if unspectacular progress in both health and income. It is instructive to compare India with China, where progress has (sometimes) been much more rapid, leading to an almost forty-year increase in life expectancy over the forty-year period. But much of the Chinese improvement comes from the fact that the starting point is during the famine associated with the Great Leap Forward of 1958 to 1961 in which it is estimated that 29 million people died (Macdonald 2003). After 1970 (or by starting at an earlier date), China did indeed make progress in increasing life expectancy, although the most rapid progress was *prior* to the acceleration of economic growth after 1980; indeed, China provides one of the strongest counterexamples to the "wealthier is healthier" hypothesis; see, in particular, Drèze and Sen (2002, chapter 4). India's progress has been much steadier than China's although, like China, its health improved most rapidly during periods of relatively slow economic growth.

As can be seen from figure 9.2, South Africa's history of health and income is almost as spectacular as China's. In the 1960s and 1970s, before HIV and AIDS, South Africa was well below the curve because of apartheid. Indeed, if the country had been split into two, one rich and white, one poor and black, both would have been close to the curve, although in very different positions. Put differently, the distribution of income between whites and blacks (with the mean income of whites around seven times that of blacks), makes average income a poor indicator of health, even if individual incomes were closely related to individual health. In 2000, South Africa's income per capita was \$7,409, more than three times that of India in the same year. But if we adjust the South African figure for the distribution of income between whites and blacks in South Africa, using the (rough) 7:1 rule, Africans in South Africa are only about 50 percent better off than Indians in terms of GDP per capita.

Figure 9.2 shows that, until 1990, South Africa was making gradual progress toward the curve, improving population health albeit with little growth in real income. Between 1990 and 2000, life expectancy collapsed. In 1990, life expectancy in South Africa was three years greater than in India while, by 2000, it was fourteen years less, and the reversal would be even

Fig. 9.2 Preston curves 1960 to 2000 (India, South Africa, and United States highlighted)

more dramatic if we were to exclude South African whites, for whom there has been no decrease in life expectancy.

Figure 9.3 shows the changes in life expectancy together with average growth rates. The left panel uses World Bank data for 1960 and 2000, while the right panel uses data from the United Nations (UN) population division and refers to 1955 to 1960 and to 1995 to 2000. One important difference is that the UN data, by averaging over years, exclude the effects of the 1960 famine in China. This change is responsible for a considerable flattening of the population weighted regression slope in the right-hand panel. Another difference that is important for our purposes is the treatment of South Africa. Because the UN data begin two and a half years earlier, the starting life expectancy is lowered and the ending life expectancy raised, so that the decline over the forty-year period is much reduced. Both figures show a substantial and statistically significant correlation between changes in life expectancy and changes in income, although there are many countries that are far away from the regression lines. The consistent progress in India is clear in both graphs; together with China, India's economic growth and its progress in health have been responsible for enormous reductions in income and health poverty for a substantial fraction of the population of the world. The catastrophe in sub-Saharan Africa is also well illustrated in the graphs. For many countries of the region, both per capita real income and life expectancy are lower now than they were in the late 1950s; the extreme point at the bottom left of the right-hand panel is the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Yet the HIV and AIDS mortality in South Africa (for example) has little to do with the decline in income during the late apartheid years, nor with the very slow economic growth since 1994. And in the two poster countries for the "wealthier is healthier" story, India and China, decade-by-decade averages show, if anything, a negative correlation between economic growth and improvements in health. Almost all coherent theories of mortality decline would predict that, over a period of forty years, there would be correlation between income and health; health services, public health, and education are all positively associated with both health and income. But, decade by decade, there is nothing to guarantee that, left to itself and unaided by public policy, economic growth will improve population health.

9.2 Agincourt, Khayelitsha, and Udaipur

We are here concerned with samples from three poor populations in India and South Africa. The first is a stratified sample of 1,000 households (more than 5,700 persons) in 100 villages in the Udaipur district in India, interviewed between August 2002 and August 2003, and described by Banerjee, Deaton, and Duflo (2004a,b). The second survey is of a random sample of 300 households (1,243 persons) collected between March and

Fig. 9.3 Changes in life expectancy versus GDP growth
Sources: World Bank and UN data.

July 2003 in Khayelitsha, a township of approximately 500,000 people near Cape Town. The township is composed of both houses that receive services (water and electricity) and unserviced shacks. Almost all households in Khayelitsha have a family connection to the Eastern Cape (Transkei, Ciskei, and one of the poorest areas of the country), from where their families recently migrated.

The third survey, also from South Africa, is from the Demographic Surveillance Site in Agincourt in Limpopo Province, about 500 km northeast of Johannesburg, near the border with Mozambique, where one of us (Case) was part of a team that drew a stratified random sample of 475 households (with nearly 3,000 members). All resident adult members of these households were interviewed in the period from January to August, 2004. (The questionnaires for both Agincourt and Khayelitsha are available at http://www.princeton.edu/~rpds/sa_questionnaires.html.)

The Agincourt field site is far from urban areas and has very little infrastructure. Until 1994, it was part of a "homeland" or Bantustan that was designated by the Apartheid government as a "resettlement area" where people from the townships were "supposed" to live. It is semiarid savannah, with low and unpredictable rainfall and, although people live by cultivation, the area is better suited for wild game, as in the neighboring Kruger National Park. According to INDEPTH Network (2002, chapter 16):

The main ethnic group is Shangaan, although Mozambicans, originally refugees, constitute more than a quarter (29 percent) of the total population. Both groups are Shangaan-speaking, and the Mozambicans are culturally affiliated with the South African host population. . . . Unemployment is estimated at 40–50 percent. Formal-sector employment involves migrant men who work in the mines, in the manufacturing and service industries of larger towns, and on nearby game and commercial farms and timber plantations. (198)

Survey instruments for all three sites were designed to collect information on economic and health status and, while each was adapted to its own environment, the questionnaires were developed in parallel and contain many identical questions. In Khayelitsha and Agincourt, a "knowledgeable household member" was first interviewed and asked questions about all persons in the household. All adults identified as household members were then interviewed separately and asked questions about their physical and mental health, their education, income, earnings and expenditures. In Udaipur, one household member answered an abbreviated consumption questionnaire that had been used previously by the Indian National Sample Survey. Each member was asked a battery of questions on health and mental health.

9.2.1 Economic and Educational Status

A first look at our Indian and South African households is provided in table 9.1, where it is apparent that our South African population is economically better-off, with the rural sample about half as well-off as the urban sample, and the rural Indians less than half as well-off as the rural South Africans. Monthly total expenditure per head is estimated to be 220 PPP (2003) dollars per head on average in Khayelitsha, 127.5 PPP dollars per head in Agincourt, but only 42.8 PPP dollars per head in rural Udaipur. These estimates are likely noisy, but they are not wildly out of line with other survey evidence in India (52.7 \$PPP mean expenditures from the 2002 to 2003 round of the National Sample Survey in rural Rajasthan) and South Africa (289 \$PPP mean monthly income per household member [106 \$PPP median] among Western Cape African households, and 185 \$PPP mean monthly income per member [50 \$PPP median] among Limpopo households in the 2001 South African Census). The median PPP value of food expenditure per head, which is probably more accurate, is three times as high in Khayelitsha (58 \$PPP) and twice as high in Agincourt (38 \$PPP) as in Udaipur (18 \$PPP).

Ownership of household durable goods, which is the indicator used for analyses based on the DHS (and many other health surveys) is higher in South Africa than in Udaipur. For a group of eight goods in both surveys, the median number owned is one among the Indian households, and three and two in the two South African sites. In both South African sites, four times as many households have electricity than in Udaipur. Telephones and cell phones (39 percent in Khayelitsha, 52 percent in Agincourt) and televisions (50 percent and 42 percent) are common in South Africa, but are rare in rural Udaipur (1 percent and 4 percent). These three sites also illustrate the danger of the mechanical use of indexes of durable goods ownership as short-cut measures of economic status. Electric appliances cannot be used where there is no electrification, nor cellphones where there is no reception (as in most of rural India today) so that, at the least, there is a danger of double counting. Bicycles are much more useful in some places than others and are essentially useless in a shack township whose access to the city is along a busy freeway. Although it is true that, within any given site, ownership or lack of it is likely to be a useful indicator of economic status, variations in ownership across sites will also be a function of geography, prices, and public provision of complementary infrastructure.

Using simplified versions of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) questions for measuring food insecurity, household respondents were asked whether there had been a time in the last year when, because of lack of money, an adult missed a meal, or had not eaten for a whole day, or whether a child had missed a meal. In spite of (or conceivably because of) their apparently better nutrition, Africans reported that adults

Table 9.1 Household-level characteristics: Udaipur, Agincourt, and Khayelitsha

	Udaipur		Agincourt		Khayelitsha	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Household size	5.63	5	5.49	5	4.15	4
No. of children (0-13)	2.39	2	2.02	2	1.16	1
Expenditure per member (\$PPP per month)	42.8	34.1	127.5	86.4	220.0	183.9
Food expenditure per member (\$PPP per month)	20.9	17.5	53.0	38.2	71.3	57.5
Structure is electrified (%)	21.1		83.3		84.3	
<i>Assets</i>						
Percent of households owning:						
Telephone or cell phone	1.4		52.1		39.0	
Stove—electric or gas	15.0		38.5		44.0	
Stove—wood, coal, or paraffin	99.1		31.0		81.3	
Television	3.7		42.5		50.3	
Radio or stereo	17.1		66.3		71.3	
Sewing machine	5.1		8.7		6.7	
Car	0.5		12.7		8.0	
Bicycle	16.3		8.9		2.0	
No. of assets owned	1.58	1	2.6	2	3.02	3
<i>Hunger</i>						
Percent of households reporting:						
An adult skipped a meal	28.3		39.7		59.0	
An adult went all day without eating	11.0		18.8		27.0	
A child skipped a meal	10.5		24.5		37.9	
<i>Financial status*</i>						
Percent of households reporting:						
Wealthiest category	0.7	—	0	—	0	—
Second highest	1.7	62.8	4.8	255.0	1.0	596.9
Third highest	10.6	47.2	39.6	112.3	38.0	229.3
Fourth highest	32.2	38.7	31.9	75.1	44.0	161.3
Poorest category	54.8	31.2	23.7	46.3	17.0	121.7
No. of observations	1,022	1,022	469	469	300	300

Notes: The report of children missing meals is conditional on the presence of a child less than age fourteen in the household. Statistics for Udaipur and Agincourt are calculated using sampling weights. Purchasing power parity (PPP) conversions are made using the 2000 consumption PPPs from the Penn World Tables updated to the dates of the surveys using Indian, South African, and U.S. Consumer Price Indexes. Dashes indicate there are no households in this category.

*Median values are median expenditure per person (\$PPP).

missed meals twice as frequently, went whole days without food more than twice as frequently, and children went without food nearly four times as frequently as did the Indian children; see table 9.1. While it is possible that these results have something to do with the difference between an urban, more-monetized, versus an agricultural, less-monetized environment, anecdotal clinical evidence from Khayelitsha maintains that child malnourishment is common and is often associated with maternal obesity; see also Doak et al. (2005) who provide international evidence on the prevalence of households containing both malnourished and obese individuals.

Household respondents were also asked to rate their own economic status using a question of the form "how would this household classify its financial situation these days," using a ten-rung ladder in India, and a 5 point scale in Khayelitsha and Agincourt. Table 9.1 shows that these responses are well correlated with measured expenditure per capita and that the Indian households (correctly) characterized themselves as very poor relative to the Africans. Between the South African sites, those living in Agincourt perceive themselves as poorer on average than those in Khayelitsha. Even so, the Indian and African respondents are clearly not using the same (PPP) scale; in the "poor" category, just above the poorest ranking, median PPP expenditures per head in Khayelitsha are twice as large as those in Agincourt and are four times higher than those in Udaipur. Note that this apparent adaptation takes place even across the two South African sites for which the survey instruments are identical and where there is no question of the appropriateness of PPP conversions (though price levels may well differ). Respondents in Khayelitsha consistently report themselves as poorer than respondents in Agincourt at the same levels of household total consumption per capita.

Information on education and on health status of adults in our surveys is presented in table 9.2, where when possible we also present statistics for U.S. blacks and U.S. whites for comparison with a much higher income environment. Until recently, women in rural Rajasthan did not go to school, and more than 90 percent of the women in the Udaipur sample are illiterate. Although almost half of all men can read and write, average completed education is less than three years. The populations of Khayelitsha and Agincourt are better educated, although only by comparison; more than a fifth of men and more than a third of women in Agincourt report themselves to be illiterate and, while the proportions are much lower in Khayelitsha, years of education are not very different, eight and nine for men and women in Khayelitsha and eight and seven in Agincourt.

Table 9.2 and figure 9.4 also show the distribution of self-reported health status on a standard 5 point scale in which larger numbers indicate worse health. These distributions are remarkably similar across the three developing country sites but, just as with self-reported financial status, this surely reflects adaptation or lower health expectations in India and can

Table 9.2 Individual characteristics: Udaipur (U), Agincourt (A), Khayelitsha (K), U.S. black (USB), and U.S. white (USW)

	Men					Women				
	U	A	K	USB	USW	U	A	K	USB	USW
Illiterate (%)	57.2	21.4	6.8	<i>Education</i>		92.1	35.2	5.5		
Years completed	2.9	7.6	8.1	12.8	13.7	0.6	6.5	8.7	12.9	13.8
Mean height (SD) in centimeters	164	172	167	177	177	152	160	157	163	163
BMI less than or equal to 18.5 (%)	(7.6)	(7.6)	(12.7)	(4.6)	(4.7)	(7.9)	(6.6)	(7.9)	(3.0)	(2.9)
25 less than or equal to BMI < 30	62.7	9.9	7.2	2.4	0.9	56.8	6.3	1.5	1.3	3.1
30 less than or equal to BMI < 40	0.6	14.8	19.1	34.2	41.5	1.6	28.5	27.2	28.0	26.9
40 less than or equal to BMI	0.1	5.1	5.1			0.3	16.6	36.4		
BMI > 30	0.2	0.8	1.7			0.2	1.6	11.5		
	0.3	5.9	6.8	27.5	28.4	0.5	18.2	47.9	48.8	31.3
1. Excellent	12.4	15.9	18.5	<i>Self-reported health</i>		8.7	10.8	10.4	24.1	32.0
2. Very good	31.9	32.4	24.2	30.1	35.0	26.5	25.8	21.0	28.5	34.4
3. Good	33.2	32.6	32.1	28.1	33.8	32.0	35.9	33.9	29.8	24.0
4. Fair	15.6	15.9	18.2	27.5	22.2	25.4	23.9	25.1	13.7	7.3
5. Poor	6.9	3.2	7.0	10.3	6.5	7.4	3.6	9.6	4.0	2.3
Mean	2.73	2.58	2.71	2.20	2.08	2.96	2.84	3.03	2.45	2.13

(continued)

Table 9.2 (continued)

	Men					Women				
	U	A	K	USB	USW	U	A	K	USB	USW
<i>Blood pressure</i>										
Normal	55.0	54.1	48.6			61.0	57.0	45.3		
High-normal	25.1	26.4	24.7			23.0	21.2	24.4		
Stage 1	14.0	14.4	17.6			10.3	12.8	17.9		
Stage 2	3.8	3.5	6.1			4.2	4.6	8.3		
Stage 3 or higher	2.0	1.5	3.0			1.5	4.4	4.1		
Stage 1 or higher	19.8	19.4	26.7	35.8	28.1	16.0	21.8	30.3	42.0	32.8

Notes: Maximum observations used in calculations for Udaipur are 1,057 men and 1,242 women, for Agincourt are 529 men and 770 women, and for Khayelitsha are 309 men and 398 women. Means for Udaipur, Agincourt, and the United States were calculated using sampling weights. Blood pressure measures for Agincourt are based on the average of a second and third reading taken. Blood pressure is categorized as high-normal if the systolic reading is greater than 130 or the diastolic reading is greater than 80; stage 1 hypertensive if systolic is greater than 140 or diastolic is greater than 90; stage 2 hypertensive if systolic is greater than 160 or diastolic is greater than 100; stage 3 or higher if systolic is greater than 180 or diastolic is greater than 110.

Data for the United States are for non-Hispanic white and black adults aged twenty to seventy-four. Data on heights, body mass index (BMI), and blood pressure for the United States are based on published tables from NHANES 1999–2002. U.S. hypertension results are reported for all individuals stage 1 hypertensive or higher, which include all persons currently taking antihypertensive medication. Data on educational attainment and self-reported health status are from the National Health Interview Survey 2001. Standard deviations (SD) for heights in the United States were approximated using a design effect of 2.50. Blank cell indicate data unavailable.

Fig. 9.4 Self-reported health status in five populations: 1. Udaipur, 2. Agincourt, 3. Khayelitsha, 4. U.S. blacks, 5. U.S. whites

hardly be taken as an exception to the "wealthier is healthier" rule. But while self-reported health status is adapted to people's circumstances, that adaptation is far from complete. While there is not much improvement in self-reported health status across the three developing country sites—except for men in the "excellent" category—both blacks and whites in the United States report that they are much healthier: 32 percent of white women and 24 percent of black women in the United States report themselves to be in excellent health, which stands in sharp contrast to reports from South Africa and India, in which only 10 percent of women report excellent health. Figure 9.4 also shows that women report worse health status than men, something that appears to be a worldwide phenomenon.

9.2.2 Measures of Health Status: Height, Weight, Body Mass Index, and Hypertension

Measures of height and weight are useful because they are directly comparable across countries and are (relatively) objective, given that they are not self-reported but measured by the survey teams in all three sites. Adult height, which does not change much until old age, or until differential selection by mortality or migration affects the population, provides a useful indicator of long-term nutritional status, which in turn is influenced both by the availability of food and by the disease environment, particularly during middle infancy. Indeed, much of the variation in adult height is set by age four, in that deficiencies in growth up to that age cannot be made up later (Dahlmann and Peterson 1977), so that contemporary cross sections of adult height are informative about the epidemiological and nutritional environment many years in the past. Similarly, the burden of chronic disease among contemporary middle-aged adults is likely to be higher among those whose early growth was compromised by a negative health and nutritional environment up to age four of which their current height is an indicator. Among adults in currently rich countries, height tends to rise most rapidly with year of birth among the older members of the population, many of whom experienced an adverse epidemiological environment in childhood, and then flatten out among the younger adults, born in a more benign environment. In Europe, Schmidt, Jørgensen, and Michaelsen (1995) have shown that the flattening out of heights among military conscripts tends to occur about two decades after the end of the decline in postneonatal mortality, itself an indication of improvements in nutrition and infections, driven both by higher living standards and public health measures such as the provision of safe drinking water.

Table 9.2 shows that both South African groups are taller than the Indians, and all are considerably shorter than contemporary Americans measured in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III, 1988–1994). The poorer South African group, in Agincourt, is taller (5 cm for men, and 3 cm for women) than the better-off group in Khayelitsha. The rural Indians are shorter still, 3 cm (men) and

5 cm (women) shorter than the Khayelitsha group. It is possible that there is some genetic component to height across South African ethnic groups, but it is generally believed that the genetic contribution to intergroup comparisons of height is small relative to the contribution from the nutritional and disease environment (Floud, Wachter, and Gregory 1990, figures 5.4, 5.5, 6.1). In this context, note the very large variation in heights in all three sites compared with the United States. The standard deviation of heights in India and South Africa is roughly twice that in the United States and is exceptionally large for men in Khayelitsha. A healthier environment not only improves *average* health, but it also sharply reduces disparities because it is the poorer individuals who bear the greatest burden of infectious disease and poor nutrition. Both average height and the standard deviation of height are indicators of the health environment.

Figure 9.5 shows graphs of height against age for ages zero to fifty in the top panel and for children only in the bottom panel. (Gaps exist between ages thirteen and eighteen for the South African surveys; young adults of these ages were not measured.) In order to avoid possible bias from differing proportions of men and women and different ages, we first calculated averages of women's and men's heights separately and then took the (simple) average of these two at each age. While adult heights are higher in the two South African sites than in Udaipur, child heights in Khayelitsha and Udaipur at each age are indistinguishable. (Results are very similar when children's heights are plotted separately by sex.) Although children in Agincourt are slightly taller at each age from four to ten, there is no height deficit in middle infancy in Udaipur compared with Khayelitsha, suggesting that (unless the adolescent growth spurt accounts for a different proportion of adult heights in the two sites) the height discrepancy among the adults will not exist in the next generation, and that the health environment in Udaipur has caught up with that in South Africa. Of course, we must treat these results with caution if only because, in localized sites like these, health selective migration is potentially important in a way that is not true for the population as a whole. Furthermore, as shown in figure 9.6, the Indian children are lighter than the South Africans. Weight for age is usually taken to be an indicator of short-run nutritional status, but in the context of international comparisons, it is unclear why height and weight for age should give such different pictures.

Figure 9.7 shows heights against age for adults only. The U.S. data at the top of the graph, taken from NHANES III, show the slow down in the growth of height for those born after about 1950, after which it is plausible that improvements in infant health had exhausted their potential for increases in adult height. The Udaipur data also show some slowdown (or even halt) in the rate of height increase for those born after around 1960. There is possibly also some flattening in the curves for Khayelitsha and Agincourt, although in both cases the samples are too small to permit definitive conclusions. (Note that, in spite of appearances, the data in the top panel of figure

Fig. 9.5 Heights by age in Udaipur, Agincourt, and Khayelitsha

Fig. 9.6 Children's weights by age: Udaipur, Agincourt, and Khayelitsha

Fig. 9.7 Heights of adults by year of birth in India, South Africa, and the United States

9.5 are the same as those in figure 9.7; they look different because of the larger scale and the plotting against date of birth rather than age.)

If the height differences across the sites are large, they are dwarfed by differences in weight. Table 9.2 shows the distribution of body mass index (BMI) across the sites and again presents statistics from the United States for comparison. Sixty-three percent of men and 57 percent of women in rural Udaipur have a BMI of less than 18.5, which is the international cutoff for *underweight* (World Health Organization [WHO] Expert Consultation 2004). Few of the South Africans are underweight, but 75 percent of the women in Khayelitsha are stage 2 (BMI between 25 and 30) or stage 3 (BMI over 30) *obese*. In Agincourt, obesity among women is less startling, but still highly prevalent, with 47 percent of women stage 2 or 3. Men are much leaner than women, and somewhat leaner in Agincourt than in Khayelitsha. The fraction of women with a BMI over 30 in Khayelitsha is close to that for black women in the United States. These results are consistent with results found for a much larger, nationally representative sample of Africans measured in the 1998 South African Demographic and Health Survey (see Puoane et al. 2002). They are also consistent with the existence of substantial obesity among women, particularly urban women, in other middle-income developing countries, although none appears to approach the prevalence in South Africa (Martorell et al. 2000, table 1).

The pronounced differences in BMI, both between countries and between men and women in South Africa, can also be seen in figure 9.8, which presents the distributions of BMI by country and sex. (Agincourt is omitted for clarity, but lies between Udaipur and Khayelitsha.) In both countries, women's BMIs show greater variance than do men's, but the difference in South Africa is especially noteworthy.

Hypertension, in part associated with obesity, is also more prevalent among the South Africans and is somewhat more prevalent among women than men in Khayelitsha and Agincourt, although perhaps less than might be expected given the gender differences in obesity. The prevalence of hypertension in urban Khayelitsha is similar to what we find in the United States among whites, though it remains much lower than prevalence among U.S. blacks (data from NHANES 1999–2002.) South African townships are already suffering from the posttransitional health problems of diabetes and stroke, which have yet to make an appearance in rural Rajasthan.

In our three sites, many respondents will not have seen a physician or health care professional for the physical problems they face, and so asking the types of questions one finds in, say, the National Health Interview Survey on whether "a doctor or nurse or health care professional has ever told you that you have [particular chronic conditions]" is not illuminating. Instead, we ask participants about the physical symptoms they have encountered in the last thirty days. Figure 9.9 and table 9.3 show the prevalence of

Fig. 9.8 Body mass indexes by sex: Udaipur and Khayelitsha

Fig. 9.9 Prevalence of conditions in Udaipur and Khayelitsha

Table 9.3 Physical symptoms: Udaipur (U), Agincourt (A), Khayelitsha (K), and United States (% of adults reporting)

Symptoms	Men				Women			
	U	A	K	US	U	A	K	US
Cold/flu	36.8	42.5	47.2	12.2	31.8	38.2	52.9	13.3
Fever	30.7	6.2	51.6		35.9	7.5	57.0	
Persistent cough		12.9	23.2			11.4	24.6	
Dry cough	25.5				16.6			
Productive cough	8.8				13.1			
Cough with blood	1.5	1.1	3.6		1.1	0.9	3.5	
Chest pain	11.9	12.0	19.4		12.4	17.7	22.1	
Body ache	32.3	15.8	28.1		53.7	28.8	38.5	
Head ache	37.0	41.8	33.9	11.0	49.6	54.2	53.7	23.1
Back ache	27.8	12.9	20.0	28.6	40.7	21.1	30.9	34.2
Vomiting	7.0	2.1	4.2	4.0	10.8	3.6	4.5	5.6
Diarrhea	15.5	10.9	7.1		17.5	10.3	8.8	
Weakness	22.1	13.5	16.8		26.2	19.3	16.4	
Worms in stool	2.9	2.2	3.9		3.3	0.7	4.0	
Pain in upper abdomen	18.9	10.1	11.3		27.5	10.5	16.1	
Pain in lower abdomen	10.1	6.0	6.5		14.7	15.7	29.0	
Genital ulcers	0.5		0.6		2.2		3.0	
Painful urination	11.6	8.0	6.5		8.8	7.3	13.1	
Swollen ankles	1.0	4.3	3.9		2.2	5.4	8.1	
Severe weight loss	1.7	7.5	14.6		3.4	9.5	16.1	
Memory loss	1.2	9.4	12.0		2.0	11.3	15.9	
Vision	14.7	11.2	19.1	7.4	15.6	18.1	21.2	10.5
Hearing	3.3	3.3	4.5	3.7	4.4	5.2	6.0	2.5
Tuberculosis	3.9	4.6	10.0		1.4	2.0	6.3	

Notes: Reports refer to symptoms the respondent has experienced in the past thirty days, with the following exceptions. Reports for tuberculosis (TB) refer to whether a doctor, nurse, or a staff member at a clinic or hospital has ever told the respondent that he or she has TB. For Khayelitsha and Agincourt, vision and hearing impairment is for current vision and hearing, with glasses or a hearing aid. The Udaipur survey asked whether the respondent had experienced "weight loss" in the past thirty days; the South African surveys asked about "severe weight loss." The U.S. statistics are calculated from National Health Interview Surveys (NHIS) 2002 and 2003. For the United States, vomiting includes vomiting and diarrhea. The numbers of responses for the Indian survey range from 1,050 to 1,055 for men, and from 1,238 to 1,242 for women. Numbers of responses for the Khayelitsha survey range from 308 to 310 for men, and from 395 to 398 for women, and for the Agincourt survey are 529 for men and 769 for women. The number of responses for the NHIS range from 26,872 to 26,913 for men, and from 34,885 to 34,942 for women. Means for Udaipur, Agincourt, and the United States are weighted using sampling weights. Blank cells indicate data unavailable.

twenty-two health conditions that were asked in all three surveys. Participants in India report more body ache, backache, vomiting and diarrhea, and more pain in the upper abdomen. The South Africans report more chest pain, swollen ankles, and weight loss. More notable is the similarity between the three different sites. Figure 9.9 presents prevalence rates for Udaipur and Khayelitsha; the correlation across the reported health conditions in the figure is 0.84. Americans are only half as likely to report vi-

sion problems as are South Africans or Indians, but almost as likely to report hearing problems. Perhaps vision impairment is more easily remedied than is hearing.

We also included in all three sites questions on depression and anxiety, results for which are reported in table 9.4. Substantial percentages of men and women in all three poor sites reported that over the last year they had had a period of a month or longer during which they worried most of the time and, of those, between 38 and 55 percent said that this worrying had significantly interfered with their normal activities. Similarly, indicators of depression (feeling sad, crying a lot, not feeling like eating) were prevalent in the three sites, with no evidence of better mental health among the better-educated and better-off South Africans. Women consistently report worse mental health than do men, something that is also true in the United States among both blacks and whites. But perhaps the most notable feature of the table is the much better mental health of the Americans relative to both the South Africans and Indians, even when the questions "I felt sad" or "everything was an effort" are identical. American whites are certainly economically better-off than any of the other groups, yet we find no evidence that American blacks have worse mental health than American whites nor, in our developing country data, that those who live in urban Khayelitsha have better mental health than those who live in rural Rajasthan, in spite of a fourfold difference in levels of consumption.

9.3 The Correlates of Health

We examine the relationship between household resources, BMI, and hypertension in table 9.5. The upper panel presents regression results in which BMI is regressed on the number of assets owned by the household, with controls for age and sex. In all three sites, we find a significant positive relationship between BMI and assets owned. Controlling for age and sex, each additional asset is associated with an increase in BMI on the order of 0.3 to 0.5 points. This may be either because lack of resources constrains a household's ability to purchase food or because adults living in wealthier households are not required to do as much strenuous work. To gain a better sense of the mechanisms at play, we add to the BMI regressions a control for whether households report that "in most months" an adult went all day without eating because there wasn't enough money for food. In all three sites, adult BMI is negatively correlated with this indicator, conditional on the number of assets, age, and sex, although only significantly so in our urban Khayelitsha site. Adding this control to our regressions reduces the coefficient on assets owned, but only slightly.

That higher BMIs are associated with a greater risk of hypertension can be seen in the bottom panel of table 9.5 and in figure 9.10. Table 9.5 reports changes in the probability of being stage 1 hypertensive or higher, given a

Table 9.4 Depression and anxiety: Udaipur (U), Agincourt (A), Khayelitsha (K), U.S. whites (USW), and U.S. blacks (USB)

	Men				Women					
	U	A	K	USW	USB	U	A	K	USW	USB
<i>Depression</i>										
Percent of adults who report that <i>some or most of the time</i> they:										
Cried a lot	7.4	2.9	11.3			30.2	14.2	27.9		
Felt sad	31.9	29.9	37.2	8.1	11.5	49.0	40.4	38.9	12.6	17.1
Did not feel like eating	25.3	22.4	31.4			39.4	31.0	35.4		
Did not feel like working	28.7					46.7				
Could not get going		18.9	31.7				29.4	37.9		
Everything was an effort	21.2	24.0	39.5	10.7	13.4		32.0	47.7	13.9	18.3
Sleep was restless		33.6	44.3				45.4	47.2		
Restless or fidgety				14.8	14.1				18.1	18.7
Nervous				12.6	11.2				18.4	16.2
Hopeless				4.9	5.4				7.1	8.4
Worthless				4.3	4.7				6.0	6.6
Conditional on answering some or most of the time: this interfered with life or activities "a lot"				11.4	11.9				12.6	13.0
<i>Anxiety</i>										
Percent of adults reporting:										
A period of 1 month or longer worried most of the time	30.8	33.8	22.0			24.3	40.9	30.9		
Conditional on worrying: this interfered with normal activity "a lot"	46.0	52.0	52.3			37.6	55.2	46.2		

Notes: Among those who report a period of one month or longer of worry, reported is the fraction who said this interfered with their ability to carry out normal activities "a lot." Means for Udaipur, Agincourt, and the United States are weighted using sampling weights. Blank cells indicate data unavailable.

Table 9.5 Hypertension, body mass index, and economic status

	Udaipur			Agincourt			Khayelitsha		
	<i>Dependent variable: Body mass index</i>								
An adult went all day without eating in most months	—	-.662 (.370)	-.375 (.759)	—	-2.645 (1.075)	-1.463 (1.089)	—	-2.287 (.855)	-1.792 (.869)
No. of assets	.393 (.083)	—	.387 (.084)	.301 (.054)	—	.285 (.056)	.378 (.116)	—	.328 (.118)
Age	.014 (.008)	.013 (.008)	.014 (.008)	.066 (.008)	.062 (.009)	.066 (.008)	.122 (.019)	.123 (.019)	.124 (.019)
Female	.480 (.234)	.511 (.235)	.482 (.234)	2.567 (.302)	2.533 (.305)	2.571 (.302)	7.149 (.480)	7.155 (.482)	7.155 (.479)
No. of observations	2,118	2,125	2,118	1,257	1,257	1,257	683	683	683
	<i>Dependent variable: High blood pressure</i>								
Body mass index			.004 (.001)			.010 (.002)			.009 (.003)
No. of assets			.004 (.006)			.005 (.004)			-.018 (.009)
Age			.004 (.001)			.008 (.001)			.015 (.001)
Female			-.039 (.017)			-.037 (.023)			-.027 (.042)
No. of observations			2,082			1,244			668

Notes: Body mass index coefficients were estimated from OLS regressions, and blood pressure coefficients from probit regressions. In the lower panel, we report changes in the probability of stage 1 hypertension or higher, given a change in each right-side variable. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Regressions for Udaipur and Agincourt are weighted using sampling weights. Dashes indicate variable was not included in regression.

change in each of the right-side variables, estimated using probit regressions. Holding constant age, sex, and asset ownership, an increase in BMI of 1 point is associated with a 1 percentage point increase in the probability of hypertension in our South African sites, and a .40 percentage point increase in Udaipur. This difference across sites suggests that there might be a nonlinear response, with BMI having little effect on the risk of hypertension at low levels, but a larger effect among the obese. However, figure 9.10 shows that the main difference between Udaipur and South Africa is attributed to a shift effect, whereby the Indians are at higher risk for hypertension, independently of their levels of BMI, and presumably due to some other unmeasured risk factor.

We have also looked at the effects of BMI and weight on self-reported health status. The results are strongest for the effect of weight, where the relationship differs in an interesting way across the sites. In Udaipur, where *underweight* is the main problem, greater body weight is *positively* associated with self-assessed health; conditional on age and sex, an additional

Fig. 9.10 Body mass index and hypertension

kilo improves self-assessed health by 0.015 on a 5 point scale. The same effect is seen, albeit attenuated (0.005) in Agincourt, but is effectively zero in Khayelitsha. By contrast, in the United States, both blacks and whites report themselves in *worse* health (-0.01) when they weigh more, an effect that is stronger among women.

One way to calibrate the effects of health conditions is to examine their impact on self-reported health status. In all three sites, virtually all health conditions have a significant deleterious effect on self-reported health status, whether we control for household expenditures, assets, or education. When run separately for men and women, there are a few cases in which the symptom has no significant effect, but these are relatively rare conditions, like memory loss for women (but not men) and genital ulcers for men (but not women) in India, and genital ulcers, worms, cough with blood, and vomiting for women in Khayelitsha. When all health conditions are jointly regressed on self-reported health status, the coefficients are around one-third smaller than when they are regressed one at a time, as is to be expected given comorbidities. The effects of each condition on self-reported health are typically somewhat larger in India than in South Africa and are only weakly correlated across the sites; for example, weight loss and a cough with blood have much larger effects on health status in Udaipur, while the reverse is true for hearing problems and for diarrhea, which is much more prevalent among the Indians. (See Case and Deaton [2004] for further details on these results.)

We can also examine whether anxiety, depression, and self-assessed health status have similar correlates across our sites. The first two columns of table 9.6 present results for anxiety, which we model as an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent answered that he or she had experienced a period of a month or longer, in the preceding twelve months, when most of the time he or she felt worried, tense, or anxious. The second set of columns examines the determinants of a depression index, which is the number of depression-related questions to which the respondent answered that he or she had felt that way some or most of the time in the past week. The last two columns examine self-reported health status on a 5 point scale for the South African surveys and a 10 point scale for the Indian survey. All indicators are such that higher values refer to worse outcomes so that the signs are expected to be the same across all columns.

For each outcome, we examine the impact of a number of variables that we believe *a priori* could affect anxiety, depression, and health status. These include the number of reported limitations in activities of daily living (ADL), which is the sum of the number of ADLs for which the respondent expressed having any sort of difficulty. In addition, we include three types of economic controls: indicators that an adult or child missed a meal because there wasn't adequate money for food, the number of assets the

Table 9.6 Anxiety, depression, and self-reported health status

	Anxiety		Depression		Health status	
	<i>Khayelitsha</i>					
No. of limitations in ADLs	.005 (.017)	.006 (.017)	.452 (.107)	.451 (.107)	.206 (.047)	.204 (.047)
Indicator: Adults skipped meals	.122 (.037)	.123 (.037)	-.059 (.226)	-.064 (.227)	.089 (.093)	.083 (.093)
Indicator: Children skipped meals	.052 (.043)	.050 (.042)	.091 (.249)	.094 (.249)	-.063 (.103)	-.059 (.103)
No. of assets owned	-.012 (.008)	-.014 (.008)	-.121 (.048)	-.117 (.048)	.001 (.020)	.007 (.020)
Years of completed education	— (.007)	.011 (.007)	— (.039)	-.021 (.039)	— (.016)	-.031 (.016)
Age	.005 (.001)	.007 (.001)	.038 (.008)	.036 (.010)	.029 (.004)	.025 (.004)
Indicator: Female	.078 (.033)	.072 (.033)	.517 (.196)	.531 (.198)	.293 (.081)	.315 (.082)
No. of observations	706	706	701	701	696	696
	<i>Agincourt</i>					
No. of limitations in ADLs	.017 (.013)	.017 (.013)	.332 (.061)	.332 (.061)	.281 (.032)	.282 (.032)
Indicator: Adults skipped meals	.118 (.037)	.114 (.037)	.532 (.170)	.488 (.170)	.275 (.079)	.259 (.080)
Indicator: Children skipped meals	-.032 (.039)	-.028 (.039)	.330 (.184)	.331 (.184)	-.082 (.086)	-.087 (.086)
No. of assets owned	-.011 (.005)	-.011 (.006)	-.084 (.025)	-.066 (.026)	-.008 (.012)	.001 (.012)
Years of completed education	— (.004)	.000 (.004)	— (.018)	-.046 (.018)	— (.009)	-.023 (.009)
Age	.002 (.001)	.002 (.001)	.019 (.004)	.011 (.005)	.018 (.002)	.014 (.002)
Indicator: Female	.066 (.028)	.068 (.028)	.543 (.133)	.536 (.133)	.188 (.062)	.183 (.062)
No. of observations	1,207	1,206	1,210	1,209	1,211	1,210

(continued)

(continued)

household owns, and the years of education the respondent has completed. In each regression, we also control for the respondent's age and sex.

Results are similar for our two very different South African sites. Limitations in ADLs have a large and significant effect on depression in both Khayelitsha and Agincourt, with an additional limitation associated with a 0.3 to 0.5 point increase in the depression index on average. In addition, ADL limitations are significantly associated with self-assessed health status, with additional limitations increasing (worsening) self-assessed health in both sites by 0.2 to 0.3 points. When adults in the household skip meals, this increases the probability of reporting a period of anxiety by 12 per-

Table 9.6 Anxiety, depression, and self-reported health status

	Anxiety		Depression		Health status	
	Udaipur					
No. of limitations in ADLs	.020 (.007)	.020 (.007)	.369 (.029)	.368 (.029)	.196 (.021)	.198 (.021)
Indicator: Adults skipped meals	.043 (.025)	.046 (.026)	.383 (.095)	.380 (.095)	.091 (.062)	.081 (.062)
Indicator: Children skipped meals	.170 (.044)	.169 (.043)	-.222 (.150)	-.222 (.150)	.149 (.100)	.151 (.100)
No. of assets owned	.002 (.007)	-.001 (.007)	-.030 (.030)	-.028 (.028)	-.077 (.017)	-.070 (.018)
Years of completed education	—	.006 (.004)	—	-.003 (.014)	—	-.014 (.008)
Age	.001 (.001)	.002 (.001)	.004 (.003)	.003 (.003)	.008 (.002)	.007 (.002)
Indicator: Female	-.101 (.022)	-.086 (.024)	.383 (.085)	.377 (.092)	-.045 (.057)	-.081 (.062)
No. of observations	2193	2190	2196	2193	1805	1802

Notes: Anxiety refers to an indicator variable that the respondent reported a period of one month or longer in the past twelve months in which he or she "felt worried, tense, or anxious." Estimates for anxiety are from probit regressions. We report the change in the probability of reporting anxiety, given a change in each right-side variable. Depression is the simple sum of the number of times the respondent answered that "some or most of the time" he or she had the depression symptoms. For Agincourt and Khayelitsha, these refer to the following eight depressive symptoms: feeling sad, miserable, depressed, that everything was an effort, sleep was restless, respondent did not feel like eating, could not get going, and the respondent cried a lot. For Udaipur, these refer to the following five depressive symptoms: feeling sad, did not feel like working, sleep was restless, did not feel like eating, and the respondent cried a lot. Dashes indicate variable not included in the regression.

centage points in both South African settings. In contrast, children missing meals is not a significant determinant of anxiety in either Khayelitsha or Agincourt, but is significantly associated with depression in Agincourt. Assets appear to be protective against anxiety and depression in both sites, but have no significant association with self-assessed health. Of the socioeconomic variables included in our analyses, it is education that is significantly associated with better health in both Agincourt and Khayelitsha.

Taken together, these suggest different aspects of socioeconomic status (SES) protect in different ways: education appears to protect health status, but has little effect on anxiety or depression, while assets protect against depression, but not against poor health in these sites.

In both South African sites, older adults are significantly more likely to report anxiety, depression, and poor health, although changes in all three measures with age are more pronounced in Khayelitsha than in Agincourt. Women report more anxiety in both sites, and their depression indexes are 0.5 points higher on average.

Some of the results for Udaipur mirror those seen in our South African sites. Limitations to ADLs increase depression and worsen self-assessed

health identically to what was seen for South Africa. Adults missing meals leads to depression in Udaipur, similar to Agincourt. However, many results for Udaipur are quite different from those observed for South Africa. Women in Udaipur report significantly *less* anxiety than do men, and their self-assessed health is no worse than men's. Anxiety and depression do not increase systematically with age in our Indian site. Education is associated with better health, but not significantly so.

9.4 Conclusions

This paper has presented a descriptive account of health and economic status in three sites in rural India and in rural and urban South Africa. The broader populations of the two countries are in very different positions in the international hierarchy of life expectancy and income. While India's population health is about where it would be predicted to be given its level of GDP per capita, South Africa, like the United States, has poor health relative to its income and, because of HIV and AIDS, has a current life expectancy that is lower than India's. But even before the onset of the epidemic, South Africa's life expectancy was lower than would be expected from its income, largely because of the degree of inequality between its population groups. If we use mortality as a measure of economic success (Sen 1998), both South Africa and the United States are less successful than would be warranted by their resources, even without taking into account the distribution of income within them. Over the last forty years, India's population health has improved along with its levels of real income; though, decade by decade, the rate of progress in health has not been closely correlated with progress in economic growth. South Africa's population health improved through much of the same period, in spite of little or no economic growth, either under apartheid, or in the decade since. But with HIV and AIDS, it has shared in the collapse of life expectancy that is widespread through sub-Saharan Africa.

The lack of any simple and reliable relationship between health and wealth also characterizes our three field sites, one in rural Rajasthan, and two in South Africa, one in a shack township and one a rural area that, until 1994, was a Bantustan area. Income levels across the three sites are roughly in the ratio of 4:2:1, with urban South Africa richest and rural Rajasthan poorest, while ownership of durable goods, often used as a short-cut measure or check of living standards, are in the ratio of 3:2:1. These differences in economic status are reflected in respondents' own reports of financial status, although not to the same degree as the monetary measures; people know that they are poor, but appear to adapt their expectations to local conditions, at least to some extent. The South Africans are certainly taller and heavier than the Indians—although their children are no taller at the same age—but their self-assessed physical and mental

health is no better, and they report that they more often have to miss meals for lack of money. And in spite of differences in incomes across the three sites, they report a very similar list of symptoms. Where the "wealthier is healthier" hypothesis seems to work is in comparisons between the three poor sites and much richer Americans. White Americans self-report better health than do black Americans, but both report substantially better physical and mental health than do South Africans and Indians in our three sites.

In spite of their much lower incomes, urban women in South Africa have fully caught up with black American women in terms of the prevalence of obesity and are catching up in terms of hypertension. These women have the misfortune to be experiencing many of the diseases of affluence without experiencing affluence itself.

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Comment Amitabh Chandra

In 1996, Lant Pritchett and Lawrence Summers produced a highly influential paper that was boldly titled "Wealthier is Healthier." Their work along with the important contributions of their predecessors, notably Thomas McKeown and Robert Fogel, has advocated the sanguine view that increases in national income will improve population health. There is no disputing the striking cross-sectional association between income and conventionally used measures of health such as infant mortality and life expectancy (see figure 1 of Pritchett and Summers 1996). Indeed, since the pioneering work of Preston (1975), who first illustrated the striking relationship between life expectancy and income, social scientists have been primed to believe that countries will move along these curves as their incomes increase; so seductive is the power of graphical regularities. The key question for any scientist interested in population health is the degree to which this association is causal. If Preston curves shift upward or rightward over time, then the cross-sectional relationship is completely spurious.

Motivated by this ambitious agenda and armed with a cornucopia of data, largely collected by their own tenacious efforts, Anne Case and Angus Deaton have written a magnificent paper, which provides a nuanced interpretation for the aforementioned observation that wealthier is healthier. Few questions in economics or, for that matter, in all of social science can claim to be as fundamental to human well-being as this one. First, they consider their macroeconomic evidence: for most countries, the historical record points to a fragile relationship between decennial change in gross domestic product (GDP) growth per capita and improvements in life expectancy. In India and China, which together account for over two-thirds of the human experience since 1950, the preceding relationship is essentially zero (and often negative) for ten-year changes that occurred in the late twentieth century. We can bicker about whether these regressions should be weighted or whether they should report jackknifed coefficients, but we should not miss the substantive point: it is astonishing to note that even for countries that lie on the "steep" part of the Preston curve, those who have not yet transcended the epidemiological transition, the relationship between per capita incomes and improvements in health is tenuous.

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Economic growth appears to move the entire Preston curve to the right, raising incomes, but with no effect on measured population health. This result has important implications for the literature on the health effects of globalization. I do not know the magnitude of the relationship between globalization and its effects on economic growth (as proxied by changes in per capita income), but let us assume that this channel is large and robust. In the context of the Case-Deaton results, the role of per capita income is estimated to be too minor to actually improve population health in the short run. Critics of globalization may cheer at the impotence of the wealthier is healthier mechanism, but their glee is premature; Case and Deaton are the harbingers of unpleasant news for both champions and critics of globalization. If we hypothesize that globalization is detrimental for population health, either by increasing inequality and relative deprivation or by reducing per capita incomes, then the evidence for that proposition is also extremely weak.

Even over forty years' changes, the relationship between average per capita income growth and health is weaker than one may have expected (figure 9.3). This is a result with enormous policy relevance: virtually every theory of development would predict that nations with higher average growth rates over thirty to forty years would be able to realize improvements in health. This relationship may operate through improved investments in nutrition, public health, or women's education. The conspicuous lack of a relationship in both decennial and longer-term changes challenges the empirical basis for providing aid initiatives that are biased toward targeting economic growth. Rather than assume that economic growth causes governments to push policy levers that affect health, might it be wiser to offer incentives to push these levers directly? What levers are these? What is the historical record on such policies, and what are the determinants of successful policies that improved population health? Addressing this question is beyond the scope of this paper, but should provide an active research agenda for development economists.

"Wealthier is Healthier" and Its Discontents

Much of the belief (among economists) that "wealthier is healthier" has its intellectual antecedents in work of Pritchett and Summers (1996; henceforth, PS) who studied the relationship between increases in real income, infant mortality, and life expectancy. For many reasons, the popularity of this argument is overstated: (1) PS found an inverse relationship between the first two variables, but not between the first and third. This is surprising: given that life expectancy at birth is largely determined by infant and child mortality (not in the post HIV era, but that is not of relevance for the time period studied by PS), the lack of a relationship causes a skeptical reader to ponder the robustness of their principal result. Clearly, more research into this puzzle is warranted. (2) It is not clear that outcomes such

as infant mortality are the sufficient statistics for population health. The incidence of chronic conditions in the adult population such as diabetes, kidney disease, tuberculosis, and asthma will not affect life expectancy tabulations for several decades. (3) Higher growth rates may mask the fact that economic gains from higher growth rates may accrue to a small fraction of the population; if 5 percent of people get 95 percent of the increase in income, then it would be difficult to see a relationship between per capita and health (or the result is being driven for those whom incomes increase). In other words, if the increase in income is unbalanced across the population, population health may increase less than the health of those who benefit from income gains.

To some degree, the popularity of this theory is also a consequence of economists' intellectual predilection that higher incomes *must* improve health: either through access to better healthcare, or through the provision of better public health, population health *must* progress. The first channel may or may not be protective of health. While it is probably not damaging, higher incomes for richer countries may translate into marginal investments in health care. Better dental care, use of antihistamines, and more frequent office visits are utility enhancing but have not been shown to affect long-term measures of health. More intensive use of technologically advanced medicine has been shown to be inversely associated with "quality care" in the United States (Baicker and Chandra 2004). As Jack Wennberg and his colleagues at Dartmouth have argued for decades, "more is not better" (Fisher et al. 2003a,b).

Conscious of these concerns, Case, Deaton, and their collaborators collect data from three poor populations in India and South Africa. They obtain on assets, anthropometrics, self-reported health, depression, anxiety, blood pressure, and a rich set of health conditions. This is an extraordinarily challenging enterprise and one that established a new standard for empirical work in economics: it is no longer sufficient for us to claim "no data" as an excuse for less rigorous empirical work. The results from this new micro data set are striking. Despite having income levels in the ratio of 4:2:1 between South African communities and Udaipur, and ownership of durable goods in the ratio of 3:2:1, the correlation across the prevalence of twenty-two symptoms is 0.84 (figure 9.9). I was struck by three facts: South Africans are more likely to report missing meals, there is anecdotal evidence of child malnourishment, and the prevalence of obesity among South African women is striking. In addition to casting doubt at the wealthier is a healthier hypothesis, they also portend worsening outcomes in years to come. While it has been suggested that the association between obesity and mortality is decreasing over time as medical science improves its understanding of obesity (Flegal et al. 2005), this view appears to be idiosyncratic to the second and third waves of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) relative to the first. Attempts to

replicate this result in other data sets have failed (Calle et al. 2005). It is probably best to interpret the presence of obesity (as measured by a body mass index [BMI] greater than 30) as doubling the risk of death (all cause) relative to those with BMI of 23.5 to 24.9 (Calle et al. 1999). With this interpretation, being wealthier is certainly not healthier: a point that is further reiterated when we note the significantly higher obesity rates among African American women who are undoubtedly richer than their South African counterparts.

Let us explore three potential explanations why the maxim "wealthier is healthier" may not be as accurate as previously thought. With these explanations, I am not arguing that "wealthier is unhealthier." Rather, I am interested in pushing the observation that (1) income is neither necessary nor sufficient for improved population health, and (2) even though increasing income may be protective of population health, there may be aspects of this increase that *may* undo some the protective gains in certain populations.

Public Health

Efficacious public health policies may be the drivers of large gains in population health, but may be the consequence of good governance, foreign aid, and knowledge transmission, none of which require higher income as a prerequisite. In the framework of Preston curves, such policies move the Preston curve upward; population health improves without any change in incomes. To understand public health's role more concretely, we would want to understand the history of efficacious public health programs that targeted smallpox and cholera in 1960s and early 1970s in India. Were these campaigns the consequence of political willpower, the presence of an extensive public health service, or generous funding from the World Health Organization (WHO)? Similarly, in March 2006, the media was abuzz with reports that global measles deaths had fallen 48 percent over a five-year period. This improvement was attributed to a massive WHO-coordinated immunization program in regions of sub-Saharan Africa, where measles and its attendant maladies—pneumonia and diarrhea—are responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths. The majority of these deaths have been preventable since 1960, when an economical and highly potent vaccine for measles was invented. This decline in child mortality is clearly not associated with improvements in sub-Saharan incomes, and one would like to know the details of how and why this particular initiative was so successful forty years after the discovery of the innovation that made it feasible. Finally, the iodization of salt is championed as being one of the great success stories of public health, but we do not have a single high-quality evaluation of this intervention. What was its effect in reducing the incidence of goiter (and consequently, retardation and perhaps educational attainment)? One key testable prediction from the hypothesis that public health interventions improved health is that the variance of

outcomes should fall with the successful implementation of these programs. In the spirit of these questions, David Cutler and Grant Miller (2005) study the historical record in America between 1900 and 1936, and argue that the provision of clean water can explain half the decline in total mortality, three fourths of the decline in infant mortality, and two-thirds of the decline in child mortality. Their calculations suggest that every dollar invested in this program yielded 23 dollars in social benefit; even the upper bounds of the "wealthier is healthier" hypothesis do not generate returns of this magnitude. More work on the precise mechanisms by which population health improves would help both governments and aid agencies.

The Nutrition Paradox

I would like to draw attention to the "nutrition-paradox" that we have begun to see in developing countries. Caballero (2005) provides an extremely lucid introduction to this phenomena, which refers to the finding that many households in poorer countries have an underweight *and* overweight family member, and my discussion draws from his article. Doak et al. (2005) demonstrate that 60 percent of families with an underweight member also have someone who is overweight. This trend is not ubiquitous across all countries, but tends to be seen in middle-income countries (i.e. those with annual per capita incomes of approximately \$3000). Monteiro et al. (2004a) demonstrate that being poor is protective of female obesity in low-income countries, but is a risk-factor in middle income countries. We do not understand the mechanisms underlying this phenomenon. Any coherent explanation must be able to reconcile (1) the inverse U-shaped relationship between the prevalence of obesity and per capita incomes (note that most of the historical record points to obesity being a disorder that accompanies prosperity), (2) its concentration in women, and (3) the puzzle that other members of the same household are malnourished. Factors such as a decrease in agricultural labor, or increased access to calorically rich foods, would explain the growth of obesity in adults. Why this should be concentrated among women is a question to which I have no answer, unless the factors noted previously apply disproportionately to women. The large prevalence of female obesity noted by Case and Deaton in Khayelitsha is not unique to that part of the world. Monteiro, Conde, and Popkin (2004) study the experience of Brazil and demonstrate that economic growth has reduced the prevalence of underweight women but has replaced it with obesity (in 1997, 9.5 percent of the poorest women were underweight, while 13 percent were overweight; in 1989, those numbers were 9.7 percent and 8 percent, respectively, while in 1975, the corresponding percentages were 17 percent and 4.7 percent).

Explaining the joint prevalence of obese and underweight members of the same family is difficult. If the underweight members of the family are children, and the obese are adults, then we may be able to appeal to an ex-

planation that is grounded in the quality of calories ingested. Caballero (2005, 1515) sums this up succinctly:

Although many of these low-cost commercial foods are energy-dense, they may be nutrient-poor. And nutrient density is particularly important for growing children. For example, on a per-calorie basis, a five-year-old boy needs five times as much iron in his diet as a man. Cheap, energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods may adversely affect the growth of the child but may provide sufficient calories for the adult to gain excess weight.

I agree with his assessment, but we should note that the explanation is speculative and has not been proven. Much more work needs to be done to determine how diets interact with gender and age to produce overweight mothers and underweight children.

In contrast to piecemeal theorizing, where one uses multiple theories to reconcile different parts of the data, it may be useful to evaluate the empirical content of the "fetal origins" hypothesis in explaining some of the facts on obesity. This tantalizing hypothesis come in many flavors, but one version that may be particular relevant for interpreting the results in Case and Deaton's paper is noted by Caballero (2005): might early exposure to an environment with pervasive malnourishment activate genes that are responsible for the body accumulating body fat? This response would be maximizing in an evolutionary context, but devastating for an individual who is exposed to an environment where energy-dense foods are cheaply available. From the work of Daviglus et al. (2004), we know that obesity in young adulthood is associated with a significant increase in the Medicare expenditures on treating cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Despite the potential importance of this theory, most tests of the fetal-origins hypothesis continue to be muddled because of their uncontrolled nature, but the study by Ravelli, Stein, and Susser (1976) does stand out. In this report, 300,000 men who were exposed to the Dutch famine of 1944 had their health assessed at the age of nineteen (as part of military conscription). For those exposed to the famine in the first half of the pregnancy, significantly higher obesity rates were noted. More recent evidence comes from a recent study by David Barker (the principal advocate of the fetal-origins hypothesis). Barker et al. (2005) examine the trajectory of height, weight, and BMI in a sample of Finns who were admitted to a hospital with heart disease. These individuals were more likely to have BMIs that were below average through the age of about two. After this age, a massive increase in BMI was seen (operating through increases in weight, not height). This accelerated gain in BMI is related to the presence of insulin resistance later in life.

While our understanding of the physiology underlying the fetal-origins hypothesis continues to improve, persuasive tests of this hypothesis in hu-

man populations continue to be evasive but clamor for the attention of empirical economists. For those interested in embracing this challenging enterprise, Harding (2001) provides accessible summaries for the principal role of in utero (fetal) and neonatal nutrition in influencing the adult disease. McMillen, Adam, and Muhlhausler (2005) and McMillen et al. (2006) discuss the considerable evidence from rat and sheep populations that shed light on this hypothesis.

Relative Deprivation

An alternative explanation for why healthier may not be healthier may lie in the role of the relative deprivation hypothesis. Here the idea is that a person's health and well-being is affected by his or her relative deprivation—the degree to which the health of person *i* deteriorates as the income of person *j* increases. The causal mechanism that leads to adverse outcomes is the greater (alleged) incidence of depression, stress, and the willingness to engage in risky behaviors. Evaluating this hypothesis is a difficult task, for one needs high quality data on health outcomes, a concrete definition of who constitutes an agent's reference group (is it people in one's neighborhood, coworkers at a firm, or individuals with similar demographics?), and knowledge of what margin of a reference group's prosperity (earnings, income, wealth) affects an agent's well-being. Few data sets provide measures that allow this question to be competently executed, but that does not mean that it does not have merit. Historically, support for explanations grounded in relative deprivation has been the purview of epidemiologists (although the concept is noted in Dusenberry 1949), and I would hazard the guess that economists have a natural antipathy to it, for it wreaks havoc with the applicability of the Pareto principle that guides much of our thinking on welfare calculations. In fairness to economists, it is not the case that the epidemiological literature is particularly convincing; much of the empirical work would not meet economists standards for identification (see Deaton and Lubotsky [2003] for an example of economists challenging the premise that income inequality per se is associated with higher mortality).

Despite these concerns, the fact that Swedes with a PhD have substantially lower mortality than those with a master's degree is unlikely to be explained by conventional explanations such as greater incomes, better health care, or better maternal nutrition (Erikson 2001). A recent paper by Banks et al. (2006) notes that white Americans are in substantially worse health than the English, even after accounting for differences in health insurance. While some interpret this result as providing support for the importance of preventative health (a belief that flies in the face of the scant evidence on the returns to preventative medicine in a developed-country context), it is also possible that even higher incomes and health care expenditures in America improve health, but greater levels of relative deprivation undo some of these

gains. Once again, this is pure speculation on my part. More careful work would evaluate this explanation rigorously. More recent work by economists has begun to do precisely this. Eibner and Evans (2005) provide a summary of much of the literature and push our understanding of the empirical evidence in support of this hypothesis. They use individual death records to establish a compelling association between specific measures of relative deprivation and all-cause death, self-reported health, BMI, and prevalence of engaging in risky behaviors. Interestingly, one's location in the income distribution, that is, "rank," seems not to matter. Luttmer (2005) notes that agents are less happy when the earnings of their neighbors increase; relative consumption may enter the utility function in addition to the absolute level of consumption. If the relative deprivation hypothesis is true, then it has massive implications for the wealthier is healthier hypothesis; a country that is able to realize a 10 percent income shock for every citizen, while preserving one's rank in the distribution, would still see the health of those at the bottom worsen (a person who earned \$40k now earns \$44k, whereas someone who earned \$100k now earns \$110k; the initial difference of \$60k is now \$66k) as relative deprivation increases.

The research program underlying this paper poses questions of absolute importance. Obtaining the correct answer has the power to improve the lives of billions, but it is equally humbling to ponder the lethality of the incorrect answer. Much is known, but much more still needs to be known. We are grateful to Case and Deaton for showing us how to know it.

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