

Resource allocations for health and education should be based on evidence, not politics

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If resource allocation decisions were made based on evidence rather than internal and external politics, the education sector would get a large chunk of resources, given its potential for positive impact on health,

wellbeing and the economy, now and in the future. Researchers writing in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* say an evidence-based approach would likely see disinvestment from the healthcare sector, especially from low value and wasteful healthcare activities linked to overprescribing and overdiagnosis. Resources would then be reallocated to education, given the large burden of disease that could be avoided with better education systems.

The authors write that [school](#) disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will have significant negative effects on [health](#), adding that allocating more resources, financial and human, to support education systems is key to long-term health, wellbeing and resilience of individuals and society more generally. A recent analysis by the UK National Audit Office found that the UK [education sector](#) received about 1% of COVID support funding.

One of the authors, Dr. Anant Jani, of the Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford, said: "The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the largest ever disruption to education systems globally. Simulations suggest that around 0.6 years of schooling will be lost globally due to school closures, with higher levels for children from lower socio-economic groups, who have been historically disadvantaged because of less access to high quality education."

Suggestions from the authors on how the damage caused by COVID-19 can be minimized include identifying and working with the most vulnerable groups, strengthening school infrastructure, investing in teacher training and addressing existing curricular deficiencies. They say that [education](#) also needs to expand to include broader curricula on social and emotional health so that children have more awareness of how to stay healthy.

Dr. Jani said: "These approaches are supported by several studies which

demonstrate that intergenerational perpetuation of inequalities is lower in countries with greater educational public support programs for [low-income families](#), with health and wellbeing benefits lasting into adulthood."

More information: Anant Jani et al, Leveraging the bi-directional links between health and education to promote long-term resilience and equality, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1177/01410768211066890](https://doi.org/10.1177/01410768211066890)

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