

Review of: "Cross-national associations of IQ and infectious diseases: Is the prevalence of Corona an exceptional case?"

Riyadh Lafta

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is a very interesting article, with very rich information, and a promising scope for future designs, however, certain points should be considered and mentioned in the text to highlight the real value and the limitations of this study:

First; this is actually a correlational (ecologic) study, that is done cross-nations depending on rough estimates of independent and dependent variables. Such a design usually has some weaknesses, the main of which is the difficulty in linking exposure-disease relationship at the individual level, and the inability to control for confounding factors.

Furthermore, the results (including the correlational association) were built on the estimated numbers that are declared by the governments of the sampled countries, however, we know that –due to the population panic that COVID-19 created- some countries have manipulated the real numbers of morbidity, mortality, and other variables towards under or over-estimation attributed to different reasons, so, there is a sort of uncertainty in the outcome (findings).

On the other hand, have the authors tried to see if there is any association between the independent variables they chose to test, with the morbidity statistics of some other infectious diseases in the studied countries in order to check the consistency of their results, as IQ level would affect other infectious diseases and not solely COVID-19.

Nevertheless, the manuscript is a huge and valid work that should not be under-valued, and my decision is to accept, probably with a minor revision.