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EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENTIALS IN MORTALITY: UNITED STATES, 1979-85

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Abstract—The paper examines educational differentials in adult mortality in the United States within a multivariate framework using data from the National Longitudinal Mortality Survey (NLMS). As a preliminary step we compare the magnitude of educational mortality differentials in the United States to those documented in Europe. At ages 35-54, the proportionate reductions in mortality for each one year increase in schooling are similar in the United States to those documented in Europe. The analyses further reveal significant educational differentials in U.S. mortality among both men and women in the early 1980s. Differentials are larger for men and for working ages than for women and persons age 65 and above. These differentials persist but are reduced in magnitude when controls for income, marital status and current place of residence are introduced.

Key words—inequalities in mortality, education, socioeconomic status, race