

Orphanhood and completion of compulsory school education among young people in South Africa: findings from a national representative survey

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Description:

We examined the association of orphanhood and completion of compulsory school education among young people in South Africa. In South Africa, school attendance is compulsory through grade 9, which should be completed before age 16. However, family and social factors such as orphanhood and poverty can hinder educational attainment. Participants were 10,452 16-24-year-olds who completed a South African national representative household survey. Overall, 23% had not completed compulsory school levels. In univariate analyses, school completion was lower among those who had experienced orphanhood during school-age years, males, and those who reported household poverty. In multivariate analyses controlling for household poverty, females who had experienced maternal or paternal orphanhood were less likely to have completed school; orphanhood was not independently associated with males' school completion. Findings highlight the need for evidence-informed policies to address the education and social welfare needs of orphans and vulnerable youth, particularly females, in South Africa.

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