Age at Menarche in Indonesia

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Abstract:

Since 1937 data on age at menarche are gathered in Indonesia. An overview of the whole literature and unpublished thesis until 1996 is presented in this paper. The data originate from Java, some other also from Sulawesi, Sumatra and, recently, from Flores. The general mean values in a diachronic sequence demonstrate a trend of decrease in menarcheal age of 0.145 year per decade. This means that in general the wealth and health conditions in Indonesia improved in the last six decades. Statistically significant differences in menarcheal age between girls from different socio-economic classes and the father’s occupation, like traders (14.13), teachers (14.48) and farmers (14.63); rich (13.90), medium situated (14.60) and poor (14.88); between girls from different environmental conditions like urban (12.27), fisherman village (12.85), farmer village (13.19). The role of animal protein intake as the most influential factor where the differences in menarcheal age between girls who eat meat e.g. 13 times (11.64) and those eating only 1-4 times a week (13.46). The mother’s education constitutes an indirect influencing factor because better-educated mothers have knowledge required to give their children more suitable food. The menarcheal age is: 12.19 from mothers with university, 12.88 with highschool and 12.93 with low education. These data confirm the assertion that age at menarche constitutes a sensitive indicator of the wealth and health of a population (Bielicki & Welon 1982; Brasel 1978).

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