**Highly educated 'brain tumour risk higher'**

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Highly educated people are more likely to suffer from brain tumours than those who do not progress as far in their education, a study suggests.

Gliomas – the most common type of brain tumour which develops in the main supporting cells in the brain called glial cells – are more common among people who are university-educated, researchers said.

Experts examined data from 4.3 million people in Sweden born between 1911 and 1961.

They tracked them between 1993 and 2010 and found that 7100 women and 5700 men were diagnosed with brain tumours.

Researchers then examined lifestyle factors including levels of education, amount of disposable income and marital status.

Men with university level education, lasting more than three years, were 19 per cent more likely to develop a glioma than men who only had up to nine years of compulsory education, according to the study published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

Among women, the risk was 23 per cent higher for glioma, and 16 per cent higher for meningioma – a tumour that starts in the meninges, which are the tissues that cover and protect the brain and spinal cord.

Both men and women in professional and managerial roles were more likely to suffer brain tumours compared with those in manual roles.

And men with the highest levels of disposable income were 14 per cent more likely to get a brain tumour than those with the lowest levels.

"This study found consistent associations between indicators of higher socio-economic position and increased risk of glioma in both sexes," the authors wrote.

Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter, Winton professor of the public understanding of risk at the Statistical Laboratory at the University of Cambridge, said: "In spite of my degrees, I find these results deeply reassuring.

"For example, in each group of 3000 men of the lowest educational level, we would expect five to be diagnosed with a glioma over 18 years. In 3000 men with the highest educational level, we expect six gliomas.

"This is a classic example of where ‘big data’ can find results that are of ‘statistical’ but not of practical significance."