

2011 Southern Economic Association Conference
CSWEP Session Summary
November 19-21, 2011
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Session Title: Health Outcomes and Occupational Advancement

Chair: Shelley White-Means (The University of Tennessee Health Science Center)

Discussants: Steven Garasky, IMPAQ International, LLC) and Wilhelmina Leigh (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies)

Identifying the “Good Jobs” among the “Lousy” Ones: Job Quality and Economic Independence of Welfare Users

Hau Chyiy (Renmin University of China) and Orgul Demet Ozturk (University of South Carolina)

Abstract: In this study, we identify the jobs that facilitate economic independence among welfare users. We call these jobs “good jobs”. In our analysis, job attributes are broadened to include non-wage attributes that contribute to future earnings such as job stability and advancement opportunities. We find that the likelihood and the speed of achieving economic independence is highly correlated with employment in occupations with higher median earnings, lower ratios of part-time workers and unemployment, and occupations that require certificates or educational degrees even after controlling for hourly wage and hours of work. Our analysis complements earlier studies on job market outcomes of welfare recipients by expanding the analysis to the national level and by incorporating across-state and across-year differences in welfare policies.

Son Preference, Autonomy, and Maternal Health in Rural India

Sharmistha Self (Missouri State University) and Richard Grabowski (Southern Illinois University)

Abstract: The primary objective of this paper is to identify factors which affect maternal health in rural India. Of particular interest is to see how and whether the culture and practice of son preference (which is common and well documented) has an impact on maternal health. Specifically, this paper seeks to find out whether a pregnant woman’s maternal care is affected by the presence of son/s from earlier pregnancies. In this paper maternal health is measured by prenatal visits with a health practitioner, the receipt of tetanus shot during pregnancy, and whether the baby was delivered by a trained professional (including public or private health center/hospital/clinic). The data that is utilized in this paper comes from the World Bank’s Living Standard Measurement Survey conducted in 1997-98 in rural villages in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India. The results of this paper indicate a negative bias towards pregnant mothers via the cultural preference for sons. Even though having sons is assumed to increase a mother’s bargaining power within the family, the results show that the negative impact of son preference, by re-allocation of resources for the sons and away from others including the mother, has a detrimental impact on her maternal care.

An Economic Analysis of Abstinence-Only Sex Education in Alabama

Sondra Collins (University of Southern Mississippi)

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to assess the effectiveness and economic impact of Alabama's Title V funded abstinence-only sex education programs. The specific outcomes to be examined in this study are gonorrhea, Chlamydia, birth, and abortion rates among Alabama teens. The particular programs assessed in this study were created by Title V Section 510 of the Social Security Act and authorized under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The funding for Title V abstinence-only sex education programs became available from the federal government in 1998. The focus of this study is to determine the extent to which the decline in negative teen outcomes observed from 1998-2007 can be attributed to Title V funded abstinence-only sex education programs and the amount of public funds that were saved as a result of adopting these programs.

Breastfeeding and Child Obesity

Donna S. Rothstein (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Abstract: This paper investigates the relationship between breastfeeding and child obesity using two very rich longitudinal data sets from the United States. The results suggest that 5-6 year olds who were breastfed for 6 months or more are about 3 to 4 percentage points less likely to be obese. Adjusting for post-birth measures such as maternal employment, parenting skills, and household income does not have much of an impact on the breastfeeding estimates. However, within-sibling models result in non-significant breastfeeding effects.