The Gendered Impact of Young Children's Health on Human Capital: Evidence from Turkey

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Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of the 1985 Turkish Immunization Campaign, a nationwide campaign which vaccinated children from 0 to 60 months against measles, polio, tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis on health and human capital. I find that children age-eligible for the vaccination campaign were less likely to be disabled and illiterate and more likely to complete primary school. I find similar but smaller gains on human capital for middle-school age children who had an age eligible child in their household; furthermore, these spillover effects accrue mainly to older girl siblings. My results are interpreted within a model of intrahousehold allocation in which older children of different genders must divide their time between childcare and schooling. The findings lend support to the view that girls' human capital accumulation is particularly sensitive to the health of younger children in the household and offers another policy lever for increasing girls' educational attainment in the developing world.

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