

Healthcare utilization, socioeconomic factors and child health in India

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Abstract

This paper modelled the proximate determinants of height, weight and hemoglobin concentration of over 25,000 Indian children using data from the National Family Health Survey-3. The effects of healthcare services utilization, food consumption patterns and maternal health status on child health were investigated in a multidisciplinary framework. The results from models for birth weight and size showed that antenatal care, birth intervals, and maternal education, food consumption patterns and nutritional status were significant predictors. Second, models for children's heights and weight showed beneficial effects of child vaccinations against DPT, polio, and measles, and negative effects of not utilizing government health facilities. Methodological issues such as potential endogeneity of birth variables and appropriateness of combining height and weight as the Body Mass Index were tackled. Third, models for children's hemoglobin concentration indicated beneficial effects of food consumption patterns, treatment against intestinal parasites and maternal BMI. Finally, models were estimated for maternal weight and hemoglobin concentration. Overall, the results provide policy insights for improving maternal and child health in India.

Keywords

Anthropometric measures, child vaccinations, economic development, food consumption, healthcare services, hemoglobin concentration, simultaneity.

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