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by Health Production

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Implications of Health & Health Policy

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Question 1

Read “Effects of Welfare Reform on Illicit Drug Use of Adult Women” by Hope Corman, Dhaval Dave, Nancy Reichman, and Dhiman Das and answer the following questions.

- a) What are the authors trying to study? What is your hypothesis of how this might affect drug use and why?

The authors in the article are studying the welfare impacts on the consumption of prohibited drugs by females and underage children. Welfare reforms reduce the usage of drugs among women. This is because welfare reforms provide platforms for job opportunities. If women are employed, then they do not have time to involve themselves with the use of illicit drugs. Welfare reforms encourage the self-dependence of women by encouraging them to work, get married, and reduce the case of pregnancies outside marriage. Evidence presented by the welfare reforms indicates that it has helped in increasing employment and decreasing the caseloads of women and children's involvement in the use of illicit drugs and further decreased the over-reliance on welfare and government aid.

- b) The authors are also particularly interested in the health impacts of this policy change. How do they measure health here and do you think that's a good enough measure? Why or why not? What is your hypothesis on how this reform might affect health overall?

The overall impact of the health welfare program is the improvement of both the mental and physical health of illicit drug users. The authors employ the use of a quasi-experimental research method. Besides, in conjunction with the multivariate regression method, the authors can compare the treatment results of the welfare reforms. The method employed is not good enough for measuring health. This is because the considerations of the reform methods only included women who are unmarried mothers and uneducated.

c) What is the research design or identification strategy? Intuitively explain to me how the authors are measuring the treatment effect we talked about in class?

In the article, the writers make use of dependent and independent variables in determining the number of women who use illicit drugs. They collected data samples from the various department in the country including self-reported illegal drug usage, drug-related reformatory admittances, drug-related detentions, and drug-related emergency cases.

d) One of the measures the authors use is based on self-reports. What might be some worries about that?

Drug-related self-reports are unreliable because the information may not true about the medical status of the drug user. For instance, a mother may require financial aid and support for her children. Therefore, through the welfare reforms which has proven to work against illicit drug usage by offering job opportunities, the women might pretend to be a drug addict only to get such privileges.

e) What do the authors ultimately find for drug use and health impacts? What is the conclusion on the efficacy of this policy intervention?

In their conclusion, the writers found that illicit drug usage has adverse impacts on the health and personal life of the users. Drug use cause Solutions offered by the welfare reforms included buns on illicit drugs, imposing drug policies, and legislation. According to the authors, these are not the leading intervention in the fight against the usage of illicit drugs by women and children. Offering employment opportunities on the other hand for women with the abilities to work will facilitate care for the disabled of the children women and family. An increase in employment decreases the usage of illicit drugs.

Question 2

¹ A growing body of research suggests that conditions people experience in utero have long-term consequences on health. In a series of famous studies, British epidemiologist DJP Barker demonstrates that children born with low birth weight tend to have much higher rates of cardiovascular/lung disease at ages 50 and above. Although this evidence is suggestive, why might one be suspicious about whether this represents a causal relationship?

In Utero is a term used by health practitioners to imply 'in the womb' or 'in the uterus'. It can also be used to refer to the gestation period until the time of birth. The gestation period plays an important health role in the life of a child. Children born prematurely have weak immunity and have the tendencies of falling sick every time, unlike children who have been born after the complete gestation period in their mother's womb. According to Barker, children born with low birth weight are prone to suffering cardiovascular and lung diseases when they reach the age of 50 years and above. This information is casual evidence since most of the cardiovascular and lung diseases are lifestyle-related.

According to another research by the American Heart Association, heart disease originates from the accumulation of more bodyweight and lack of exercise. Besides, heart and lung disease may also be caused by age factor, family history, smoking, poor diet, and cholesterol accumulation in the body. From the time of birth until the child reaches the age of 50 years, all these factors play a role in their health status and the possibility of acquiring heart-related problems. Children born prematurely have chances of living a normal lifestyle without involving in the above-named causes of heart diseases. The American Heart Association confirms that people who develop chronic heart problems experience less severity to the illness later in life if they change their lifestyle. The association further explains that there is no affirmed relationship between premature birth and the prevalence of heart-related problems during old age. In most cases, the elderly have weak immunity and easily fall prey to medical conditions. Consistent

checkups and routine exercise have proven to work against heart and lung-related diseases. The conclusion by Barker, therefore, presents a causal relationship with no proof.

Reference

- American Heart Association. (July 2018). Heart Health at any age-40, 50, and 60 and beyond. Accessed [online] at <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2018/07/20/heart-health-at-any-age-40-50-60-and-beyond>
- Corman, H., Dave, D. M., Das, D., & Reichman, N. E. (2013). Effects of welfare reform on illicit drug use of adult women. *Economic Inquiry*, 51(1), 653-674.

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