

Parental Migration, Child Sickness and Health Insurance in Rural China

Abstract: Very few studies have examined the impact of parental migration on the protection of child health status, especially in China's internal migration context. Using longitudinal dataset of China Health Nutrition Survey (CHNS), this study examines how parental out-migration impact children of left-behind in rural China by comparing them with children from non-migrant parents families. Two independent variables are examined: child sickness and having health insurance. Regression models show that father migration is positively associated with child sickness, while mother migration is negatively associated with child illness. Any parental migration is positively associated with having health insurance with children. However, interaction between father migration and insurance shows that father's impact on child sickness only exists in those children who have no health insurance. This indicates that there might be some unobserved factor which impact child sickness and having health insurance simultaneously, for example, family attitude to child health protection could prevent the potential detrimental impact of father absence on child health.