

Centre For Health Economics Seminar Series 2018

BOOSTING CHILDREN'S COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Presenter: Diana Contreras Suarez, University of Melbourne
Date: Wednesday, 23rd May 2018
Time: 12.00pm - 1.00pm
Venue: RB Scotton Room
Centre for Health Economics

Abstract

Taking advantage of the exogenous variation in nutritional status resulting from a Conditional Cash Transfer program in rural areas in Colombia, we find a causal relationship between early physical development and later cognitive development in young children. We estimate the effect of the anthropometric measures on cognitive development by instrumenting an intention-to-treat effect of treatment on the anthropometric measures. Using a four-wave survey, the model yields that the exposure to the program does not explain gains in physical development one year after the intervention but it reduces the incidence of being underweight and improves BMI four and ten years after. These differentials in physical development explain around one quarter of a standard deviation gain in long-term cognitive development. Improvements in height are found only in children younger than 2. Interventions towards nutrition in children in poor settings have important implications in terms of long-term human capital development.

Presenter

Diana Contreras Suarez is a Research Fellow at the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social research at The University of Melbourne. She completed her PhD in Econometrics at Monash University. Dr Contreras Suarez is interested in the mechanisms through which public policy improves human capital and wellbeing among disadvantaged populations. Her research covers several areas, including child development, behavioural preferences, health and gender inequality in the labour market. She is currently working on the effects of water and sanitation on maternal health and the effect of skills mismatch on wages in Indonesia.

VISITORS ARE MOST WELCOME

The Seminar Series is free of charge. For further information please phone 9905 0733 or email

che-enquiries@monash.edu

Over 25 Years of Health Economics at Monash University