

Excess under-5 mortality of children born to immigrants: longitudinal evidence from France.

Abstract

Immigrant children face significant disparities in terms of their survival. To investigate whether these disparities are really due to their parental origin and to analyze the effect of contextual factors and other determinants, we used EDP (permanent demographic sample) data. This is a large French socio-demographic panel, with a sample of 648,040 births from 1990 to 2019, on which the propensity score method and longitudinal approaches were based.

The outcome variable is a binary variable indicating whether a child died before reaching age 5 or not. The independent variable is the mother's origin measured by her country of birth. Six categories of immigrant-born are identified: Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, Eastern Europe, Other Europe country, Asia and American-Oceanic or others. These categories are compared with France-born as natives. Alongside the mother's origin, we adjusted for several other predictor variables that included the sex of the child (male vs. female), twin births (categorized into single vs. multiple birth), the age of the mother (<20, 20-29, 30-39, 40+) parent's matrimonial status (single, married or civil union and widow or divorced), parental education (no level, primary or secondary, university), period (<2000, 2000-2009, 2010-2018, 2019), paternal support at child birth, the proportion of births of immigrants in the municipality.

Our findings reveal that even after accounting for confounding factors by balancing socio-demographic variables, disparities in under-5 mortality persist based on the mother's origin. Specifically, notable differences in mortality were observed among three immigrant groups: women born in Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and America, Oceania, and others. Furthermore, our study confirms the hypothesis that a higher proportion of births to immigrant children has an adverse effect on child survival. In addition, the influence of paternal support and classical determinants of under-5 mortality, such as gender, twin births, maternal age, marital status, and education was highlighted.

Keywords: under-5 mortality, immigrant, propensity score