

Maternal Health Outcome and Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Dynamic Panel Analysis

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Abstract : Maternal health outcome is one of the major population development challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa. The region has the highest maternal mortality ratio, despite the progressive economic growth in the region during the global economic crisis. It has been hypothesized that increase in economic growth will reduce the level of maternal mortality. The purpose of this study is to investigate the existence of the negative relationship between health outcome proxy by maternal mortality ratio and economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study used the Pooled Mean Group estimator of ARDL Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) and the Kao test for cointegration to examine the short-run and long-run relationship between maternal mortality and economic growth. The results of the cointegration test showed the existence of a long-run relationship between the variables considered for the study. The long-run result of the Pooled Mean group estimates confirmed the hypothesis of an inverse relationship between maternal health outcome proxy by maternal mortality ratio and economic growth proxy by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. Thus increasing economic growth by investing in the health care systems to reduce pregnancy and childbirth complications will help reduce maternal mortality in the sub-region.

Keywords : economic growth, maternal mortality, pool mean group, Sub-Saharan Africa

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