

The Impact of Female Education on Fertility: A Natural Experiment from Egypt

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Abstract : This paper examines the impact of female education on fertility, using the change in length of primary schooling in Egypt in 1988-89 as the source of exogenous variation in schooling. In particular, beginning in 1988, children had to attend primary school for only five years rather than six years. This change was applicable to all individuals born on or after October 1977. Using a nonparametric regression discontinuity approach, we compare education and fertility of women born just before and after October 1977. The results show that female education significantly reduces the number of children born per woman and delays the time until first birth. Applying a robust regression discontinuity approach, however, the impact of education on the number of children is no longer significant. The impact on the timing of first birth remained significant under the robust approach. Each year of female education postponed childbearing by three months, on average.

Keywords : Egypt, female education, fertility, robust regression discontinuity

Conference Title : ICPD 2015 : International Conference on Population and Development

Conference Location : Montreal, Canada

Conference Dates : May 11-12, 2015