

Casual Effects of Informal Care and Health on Falls and Other Accidents among the Elderly Population in China

Authors : Hong Wu, Naiji Lu, Chenguang Wang, Xinming Tu

Abstract : This article analyzes the causal effects of informal care, mental health, and physical health on falls and other accidents (e.g. traffic accidents) among elderly people. To purge potential reversal causal effects, e.g., past accidents induce more future informal care, we use two-stage least squares to identify the impacts. By using longitudinal data from a representative national China Health and retirement longitudinal study of people aged 45 and older in China, our findings indicate that informal care decreases while poor health conditions increase the occurrence of accidents. We also find heterogeneous impacts on the occurrence of accidents, varying by gender, urban status, and past accident history. Our findings suggest the following three policy implications. First, policy makers who aim to decrease accidents should take informal care to elders into account. Second, ease of birth policy and postponed retirement policy are urgent to meet the demand of informal care. Third, medical policies should attach great importance to not only physical health but also mental health of elderly parents especially for older people with accident history.

Keywords : accident, China, fall, informal care, mental health, physical health

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