

The effect of maternal education on offspring's mental health

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Mental health conditions are a leading cause of disability-adjusted life years and health costs worldwide (Bloom et al., 2011). At the same time, recent contributions have shown a strong intergenerational transmission of mental health status (Johnston et al., 2013). Thus, we answer the question: Does maternal education affect the offspring's mental health in late adolescence and adulthood?

The data we use is the Socio-Economic Panel³. We exploit exogenous variation in maternal education caused by a compulsory schooling law reform in Germany to estimate the causal effect of maternal education on the offspring's mental health by means of a 2SLS strategy.

Our 2SLS estimates reveal a negative and small effect of maternal education on the daughters' mental health outcomes. Additionally, we find that the reform results in a more favorable environment for the offspring during childhood. Thus, we are able to rule out these as potential mechanisms driving our results.

References

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³We use SOEPv32; for more details, see <http://dx.doi.org/10.5684/soep.v32>