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Early Life Health Interventions and Academic Achievement

by Prashant Bharadwaj, Katrine Vellesen Loken, Christopher Neilson
(September 2012)

forthcoming in: American Economic Review, 2013

Abstract:

This paper studies the effect of improved neonatal health care on mortality and long run academic achievement in school. We use the idea that medical treatments often follow rules of thumb for assigning care to patients, such as the classification of Very Low Birth Weight (VLBW), which assigns infants special care at a specific birth weight cutoff. Using detailed administrative data on schooling and birth records from Chile and Norway, we establish that children who receive extra medical care at birth have lower mortality rates and higher test scores and grades in school. These gains are in the order of 0.15-0.22 standard deviations.

Text: See [Discussion Paper No. 6864](#)



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