

Social Capital, Education and Health in Argentina

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Abstract

Objective

To determine the relation between education, social capital and health in Argentina

Data

We use a large cross-sectional national household survey that contains rich demographic and health information, including information on individuals' participation in several formal institutions (political parties, churches, cultural centers, labor unions, human rights groups, ecological organizations, and others), and in informal social relations (e.g., how often a person meets friends and relatives). Both of these constitute participation in structural social capital at the individual level.

Methods

We will use regression analysis to estimate the independent effects of social capital and education on health and also to determine whether education has more influence on health when higher levels of social capital are present. Since this data is cross sectional, social capital, and education may be statistically endogenous to health status. We will use instrumental variables to correct for potentially endogenous variables. We plan to use the following instrument: availability of public transportation. Under the assumption that, ceteris paribus, people are more likely to participate in organizations the higher the availability of public transportation, then, it could be used as an instrumental variable (IV) to estimate the causal effect of social capital on health.

Results

Very preliminary evidence shows: That social capital and education are positively correlated with health; that people who live in neighborhoods where public transportation is available have higher social capital; that social capital (instrumented by availability of public transportation) has a positive effect on health.

Conclusions

The results of this research will inform policy makers as to the relationship between social capital, education, and health in Argentina.