

World Bank ABCDE Conference

Session 2A: Global Issues: Vaccines and Social Security Benefits.

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June 17, 2019

First two papers evaluating impact of GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance

- Similar strategies: cross-country analyses using difference-in-difference approach
- Similar results:
- Jaupart and Dipple: positive impacts of GAVI on vaccination rates translating in lower infant and child mortality.
- Maruta and Afoakwah: reductions in neonatal, infant and child mortality, no impacts on stunting
 - *But why not looking first at impacts on vaccination ???*

Common questions: (1)

- The counterfactual in the evaluation is the absence of GAVI, not what would have happened if the funds devoted to GAVI had been used in another way, for example in strengthening health systems more generally.
 - Conclusion is that GAVI had an impact compared to doing nothing.
 - But we cannot conclude from these 2 papers that a vertical fund like GAVI is a better way to achieve health outcomes than other interventions using the same amount of funding.
 - Be careful to stress that in discussion and conclusions.

Common questions: (2)

- Why cross-country analysis?
- Many problems with cross-country regressions
- Define better the origin of the data:
 - Where does the WDI get their numbers from: extrapolated survey data?, Health Management Information Systems (HMIS).
 - Potential issue with mis-reporting of vaccination rates given the incentives build-in by GAVI eligibility.
 - Jaupart and Dipple cleverly use Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data to avoid this issue.
 - But then why not directly use the DHS (and MICS) micro-data: entirely based on household surveys, much larger sample sizes, ability to use within country-variations

More technical comments:

- Heterogeneity analyses are present in both papers and are useful,
- But instead of splitting the (small) samples in subgroups, I would prefer to see interaction effects or at least p-values showing the coefficients are statistically different from each other across subgroups.

3rd paper: Cross-Border Portability of Social Security Benefits

- Very interesting topic on which I knew almost nothing.
- Learned a lot
- Mainly descriptive paper, clear and well written.
- Not much to comment about, except that it would be nice to go beyond description and take some position in terms of policy recommendations:
 - What would be the best policies to enhance cross-border portability?