

Curtailing Access to Alcohol: Evidence on the Impact over Child Outcomes in Brazil

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March, 2019

Abstract

The consequences of excessive alcohol consumption are numerous and well-known, ranging from health issues to social repercussions – such as community and domestic violence. Apart from having a direct effect on drinkers' health, access to alcohol may influence community and intra-household dynamics leading to subtler repercussions on any of the household member, including infants. Still, broader consequences of alcohol access have received little attention in the literature. In this paper, I examine the impact of prenatal exposure to a less alcohol-friendly environment on children's health at birth. I take advantage of the adoption of mandatory night closing hours of bars and restaurants in the São Paulo Metropolitan Area, Brazil, between 2001 and 2006. I exploit the geographic variation in the timing of the adoption of these laws to identify their effect, using a difference-in-difference strategy. Capitalizing on linked confidential data I assess morbidity using mother fixed effects in my preferred specification. My preliminary findings suggest that curtailing access to alcohol improves children's health at birth. Results are robust to the choice of specification and a variety of robustness checks. A preliminary analysis of the mechanisms suggests that two underlying channels are related to my findings: alcohol consumption and violence against women.