

Three essays on HIV/AIDS related issues in Southern Africa

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Abstract

For many years, the number of HIV/AIDS-related deaths in developing countries has been increasing at such an alarming rate that it is no longer whether it will be an epidemic, but rather how severe the epidemic will be. This study addresses three important aspects of the epidemic, including effects as well as causes.

The first paper identifies the potential effects of HIV on labor market participation, which affects economic outcomes. Using Heckman selection models and Demographic and Health Survey data from Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe, results show a significant negative association between being HIV positive and currently working, as well as having worked in the past 12 months, for men and women.

The second paper measures the spillover effects of fostering to help inform welfare policies. Linear probability models with fixed effects are estimated using data from the Cape Area Panel Study to quantify the effects of orphan fostering on the school enrollment, employment, and health status of young adults living in households which foster orphans. Results indicate that young adults from higher wealth quintile households which foster orphans have a higher probability of being enrolled in school.

The third paper highlights the role played by parental investment in influencing concurrent sexual partners, a risk factor affecting the rate of HIV transmission, which can help make HIV prevention campaigns more effective. Results from multinomial logistic regressions on data from the Cape Area Panel Study show that financial support from fathers significantly decreased the probability of sexual concurrency among Black and Colored males, 11% of whom reported having been in sexually concurrent relationships.

The findings have important implications for the macroeconomic stability and future growth of the countries under investigation. The first paper suggests a need for employment protection for HIV positive individuals and their households. The second paper indicates that further research into subsidies for families taking on orphans is warranted. The third paper recommends health education programs on the risks of sexual concurrency for young adults. By providing empirical evidence, HIV policies can be made more effective, thereby mitigating any negative impacts on vulnerable individuals and families.

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