

# Revisiting the Healthy Immigrant Effect

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# BACKGROUND

## Healthy Immigrant Effect:

- ▶ Immigrants have a health advantage over native residents at time of arrival
- ▶ But have the health advantage disappear over time



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Estimate the change in health for immigrants relative to native residents:

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- ▶ (2) Estimate individual rate changes in health
- ▶ (3) Consider time-varying and time-invariant differences



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$$H_{it} - H_{it-1} = \beta i + (X_{it} - X_{it-1})\delta + (u_{it} - u_{it-1}) \quad (1)$$

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- ▶ For example: Ethnicity or Changes in Diets
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- ▶ Indirectly controls for time invariant and time-varying unobservables



# DATA:

- ▶ National Population Health Survey, 1994 - 2004
- ▶ 10,094 respondent:
  - ▶ 8,723 native residents
  - ▶ 1,120 long-term immigrants
  - ▶ 251 recent immigrants
- ▶ Four health outcomes:
  - ▶ Number of chronic conditions
  - ▶ Self-Perceived health
  - ▶ Number of visits to a family physician
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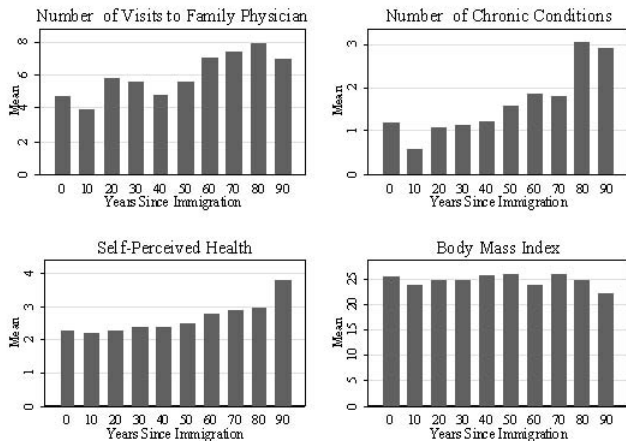
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# RESULTS:

Figure: Average Health Outcome by Years Since Immigration



# RESULTS: The Association between Immigrant Status and Change in Health Outcomes

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Dependent Variables	Covariates of Interest	Coefficient	t-test
Number of Chronic Conditions	Years Since Immigration	0.004	1.25
	Immigrant Dummy	-0.085	-1.10
Body Mass Index	Years Since Immigration	-0.001	-0.11
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## NOTES:

Number of observations = 9,271

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- ▶ ... but chronic conditions and BMI do not follow the same increase
- ▶ Immigrants' poor perception of their health may lead to more visits to family physicians



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# CONCLUSION

- ▶ The disappearance of immigrants' health advantage does not occur
- ▶ Policy implications:
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