

Does social capital affect the intensity of GP visits differently for immigrants versus non-immigrants?

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IMMIGRANTS & HEALTH SERVICES UTILIZATION

- Barriers to care
 - e.g., Language, attitudes
- Healthy Immigrant Effect (Hyman, 2001, *Health Canada*)
- Utilization patterns
- Importance of social capital

WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?

- Social networks and generalised norms of reciprocity and trust in the community, which have value to the individual and to society (Putnam, 2001)
- Community social capital (CSC): Petris Social Capital Index (PSCI) (Scheffler & Brown, 2008)
- Individual social capital (ISC):
 - Belonging to community
 - Religious services attendance
 - Tangible social support and affection
 - Participation in social physical activities
- Mechanisms: stress buffer, facilitate access to medical care, substitute for formal health care, help find employment

RESEARCH QUESTION

- To determine if the impact of social capital, measured at both the individual and community level, differentially affects the health services utilization of immigrants versus non-immigrants

DATA SOURCES

- Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) wave 2.1 (2002)
 - Cross-sectional survey to collect info on health status, health care utilization and health determinants
 - Individuals 12 years and older in Ontario
- Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) claims for FY 2006

STATISTICAL APPROACH

- Negative binomial regression
- # GP visits = $f(\text{CSC, ISC, demographics, health status, immigrant status})$

KEY FINDINGS - DESCRIPTIVES

Variable	Immigrants (mean / %)	Non-immigrants (Mean / %)
# GP visits	4.91	3.86
Belonging to community		
Very strong	25.12%	15.62%
Strong	15.95	41.83
Weak	41.03	28.86
Very weak	15.87	13.68
Tangible social support	13.33	13.62
Affection	10.39	10.82
Religious participation	34.11	21.00
PSCI	1.12	1.13
Age	54.81	45.04
Female	50.29%	50.92%
Census Aggregate Area	2.12	9.17
Self-report health		
Very Poor	12.26	9.62
Poor	29.22	25.61
Good	35.77	40.25
Very good	22.75	24.52
Chronic condition	65.48	70.58
Yrs in Canada since immigration	31.71	-----

KEY FINDINGS – NEGATIVE BINOMIAL

- CSC: PSCI tends to decrease # GP visits for non-immigrants at an increasing rate as the individual ages
- ISC
 - Affection decreases # GP visits for non-immigrants at an increasing rate as the individual ages
 - Tangible social support increases # GP visits for non-immigrants
 - Belonging to community decreases # GP visits for immigrants at an increasing rate with number of years since immigration to Canada

LIMITATIONS

- Underrepresentation of recent immigrants in the CCHS
- Lagged model

CONCLUSIONS

- CSC has little effect on GP services utilization over time
- SC may be more important for longest-term immigrants
- Need more information on the immigration experience

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THANK YOU!

- Questions?
- Please direct further questions and comments to deborah.samek@utoronto.ca