

Primary Health Care Interventions and Social Ties in Kenya

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### **Decentralization, social connections and primary health care: Evidence from Kenya**

This paper estimates the role of social connections in primary health care provision and its effect on health seeking behavior. The study employs novel survey data from Kenya, which combines information on households and Community Health Workers (CHWs). The results show that social connections strongly influence the provision of health care. Being a relative or close friend to a CHW increases the probability that a household will be visited by about 100 percent (with respect to the mean). I also find that socially connected households demonstrate better health-seeking behavior. The evidence indicates the existence of nepotism in primary health care provision, with beneficiaries of nepotism having better health-seeking behavior

**Keywords:** Community health workers, Malaria, Visits, Health-seeking behavior

**JEL Codes:** I10,I12

### **Community health workers, child health and health care utilization in Kenya**

This paper investigates the impact of a community-based health program on malaria and nutrition outcomes among children under the age of five, and health care behavior related to these outcomes. In 2005, Kenya initiated a community-based health program where community members, called community health workers (CHWs), are selected and trained to support health service delivery and act as a link between the community and the health system. We combine the Kenya demographic health survey collected in 2014 with data on the introduction of community health workers (2005–2014) to estimate the impact of the CHW program. Using the propensity score matching method, we find no strong evidence that the CHW program has had an impact on child health and health care outcomes, neither in rural nor in urban areas. These findings imply that the envisioned improvement in access to health care and health outcomes through CHWs has not been realized.

**Keywords:** Malaria, Kenya, Child health, Community health workers

**JEL Codes:** I12, I14, I15, I18

### **Information and cooperation in preventive health behavior: A case study of bed net use**

This paper assesses whether providing people with information on the public benefits of bed net use, and on what other people do, changes their bed net use behavior. I use a survey experiment from rural Kenya, where randomly selected households are provided with information on the public benefits generated by bed net use, and on the consequences of an individual's own bed net use on the health of the immediate neighbor. The results show that information increased willingness to use bed nets, and that people are more willing to use bed nets when they know other people are using them as well. Results are robust to the inclusion of a broad set of controls, including risk aversion; number of household members to have suffered from malaria in the past 12 months; and number of children in the household who are below five years age. Overall, these results suggest that in addition to free distribution of bed nets, informing people on the private and public benefits of bed nets use could potentially save many more lives.

**Keywords:** Bed nets, Malaria, Cooperation

**JEL Codes:** C93, I12, I18

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