

Individual heterogeneity in the association between social participation and self-rated health. A panel study on BHPS

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Abstract

In the last ten years, interest in social capital as a mechanism for understanding actual and perceived health has been increasing among economists (Folland 2006; Scheffler and Brown 2008; Ronconi et al. 2012; Ljunge 2014). Although pathways by which social participation, as a dimension of social capital, may have positive effect on health are well understood, empirical evidence on the relationship between social participation and self-rated health is mixed and it has never addressed the empirical problem of individual heterogeneity. This longitudinal study investigates the relationship between social participation (being member, active, and both member and active) in associations and self-rated health taking into account individual heterogeneity bias. The paper uses five waves of the British Household Panel Survey from 1991 to 1995 (unbalanced panel N=45,745). Three types of estimations are implemented. The first is an OLS with fixed effects on the original ordinal variable self-rated health. The second uses a dichotomization of the ordered variable self-rated and applies a logistic fixed effect estimation. The last estimator is the ordered logit with fixed effects implemented by Baetschmann et al. (2015). All the empirical estimations show little support of the positive relationship between social participation and self-rated health.

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