

Longitudinal Data Impact Analysis of the Brazilian 'Bolsa Família' Social Welfare Programme

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The 'Bolsa Família' Program (PBF), created in 2003 by the Brazilian government is a direct income transfer program that benefits poor and extremely poor families, through the commitment of health and education conditionalities. In order to ascertain what impacts were generated by the PBF in the living conditions of the beneficiaries, the 'Bolsa Família' Impact Assessment Survey was carried out (AIBF). The AIBF was a complex sampling longitudinal study that contrasted beneficiary families and non-beneficiaries of the program. Data collection was conducted in two rounds (2005 and 2009), and three observation groups were defined: BFP beneficiaries (Treatment group), registered in other social programs from the federal government, but non-BFP-beneficiaries (Control 1 group), and not registered in any social programs (Control 2 group). The main aim of this work is to evaluate the effectiveness of PBF with regard to health, using data collected in the two rounds of AIBF survey using the econometric method of difference in differences. Two types of dependent variables were analysed in this paper: (i) binary ones, which were analysed through logistic regression models; and (ii) continuous ones to which were fitted linear regression models. The explanatory variables considered were the following: the observation group to which the individual belonged; the time and the interaction between the two mentioned variables. Some of the analysed dependent variables, such as (a) existence of expenses with occasional medicines and (b) with health insurance for people over 14 years of age, and the amount spent on each of these costs have shown significant differences both between groups, over time and for the interaction term suggesting possible positive impacts on the health of the BFP beneficiaries. Thus it is possible to draw public policy conclusions about the impact of the program with the analysis set up we have considered.

Keywords: poverty, panel data, complex sampling, difference in differences.