

Women's empowerment in Latin American cities and its influence on infant mortality

This paper is a high-quality, technically robust, and well-reasoned examination of the explanatory power of women's empowerment in relation to infant mortality within the context of the health of communities.

This is an important and timely research in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its disproportionately negative social and economic impacts on women and girls, in the context of the 2030 agenda and particularly SDG Goal 5. The evidence points to the exacerbation of the social and economic inequities, including health, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations in rural and urban environments.

As it stands, this paper is a scientific investigation of existing data that is an excellent starting point for an issue that "has not been systematically investigated".

Therefore it should trigger further work on:

- (1) Expanding the definition and indicators of women's empowerment to include the health of women, the health of their offspring, and possibly the inter-generational health implications of women's empowerment
- (2) Refinement of the definition of women's empowerment vis a vis women's economic empowerment
- (3) Linking the research to policy and practice

Therefore, I would encourage the author to:

1. strengthen the conclusions by adding some preliminary recommendations for translating the initial findings into policy directions.
2. examine the paper's definition of WE in light of the Data2X Project (e.g., see Mayra Buvinic et al https://data2x.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Data2X-WEE-Compendium-FINAL_Pages.pdf) on defining and measuring women's economic empowerment. There is a good case to be made for including health as a factor in measuring empowerment, if it is not already included in the Data2X definition.
3. call for further research and more robust data collection.

I approve publication on condition of a more robust conclusion and recommendation section with the goal of engaging a broader constituency to advance this discussion and the 2030 agenda.