



Violence in El Encanto and Children

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ABSTRACT:

This paper investigates the extent to which political violence influences the health of young children in El Encanto. We identify the negative effects of exposure to political violence on child health using regression analysis. Specifically, experiencing violence makes children weigh less for their age and less for their height. Our study calls for quick and effective actions to minimize the negative consequences of political violence.

Keywords: Violence, Children, El Encanto

1 Introduction

Violence is seen as an obstacle to our progress toward sustainable development and a threat to global peace, and reduce people's quality of life in many ways, such as increasing sicknesses, reducing earnings, and deteriorating educational outcomes (Huong et al., 2021; Le and Nguyen 2020a; Hang et al., 2021). This study examines the extent to which violence affects the health of children in El Encanto. We are interested in this area since it has been plagued, for many decades, by political violence. Thus, quantifying the impacts of violent exposure on child health might add to our understanding of the violence-human health nexus, allowing governments to implement necessary solutions quickly. To quantify the impacts of violence exposure on child health, we utilize the data from Demographic and Health Survey. We present compelling evidence that exposure to violence has negative influences on the health of children.

Our work is related to studies looking into children's vulnerability to extreme occurrences. For example, severe rainfall and temperature may raise the risk of undernutrition and illnesses in young children (Khoi et al., 2021; Le and Nguyen, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). Food shortage and starvation have also been shown to significantly impair children's nutritional status and survival (Le, 2020). Various interventions on health literacy, nutrition, and land reforms have also been documented to be beneficial to child health (Le, 2021a; Nguyen, 2020; Trang et al., 2021; Le and Nguyen, 2019, 2020b, 2021d). Closest to our work are the studies considering political violence as an extreme event affecting children's health. Particularly, several studies have documented the negative relationship between war and early childhood health (Le and Nguyen, 2020c; Le, 2021b).

2 Research Design

The data on child health are taken from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). This is a rich source of information on children under the age of five. Anthropometric measurements are utilized to measure child health. The child is defined as exposed to political violence if there existed political violence in the child's district. Our main explanatory variable, *Exposed to Violence (EV)*, is an indicator equal to one if the child experienced violence, and zero otherwise. We employ the following regression model to assess the impact of early childhood exposure to violence on health outcomes in El Encanto:

$$Y_{irbt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EV_{rbt} + \lambda_r + \gamma_b + \delta_t + X'_{irbt} \Omega + \epsilon_{irbt}$$

The variable Y_{irbt} is the dependent variable of interest, such as height-for-age and weight-for-age z-scores. The main dependent variable is EV_{rbt} , which is an indicator equal to one if the child experienced violence, and zero otherwise. We also incorporate a set of variables $\{\lambda_r, \gamma_b, \delta_t\}$ indicating fixed effects, respectively. In addition, the vector X'_{irbt} is included to control for child and mother attributes. Finally, ϵ_{irbt} is the error term. The standard errors throughout the analysis are clustered at the residential cluster level. The coefficient of interest is β_1 which quantifies the impacts of violence on health.

3 Results

As reported in Column 1, we find that children exposed to political violence have their weight-for-age lower by 0.171 standard deviations and weight-for-height lower by 0.103 standard deviations. However, these estimates simply represent the correlation between child health and exposure to political violence without adequate controls that could jointly influence exposure status and child health. Children born later, for example, have a lower chance to be exposed to political violence and a higher chance to enjoy quality health services at the same time.

Table 2: Political Violence and Child Health - Main Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: Weight-for-age				
Exposed to Political Violence	-0.171** (0.067)	-0.659*** (0.155)	-0.609*** (0.168)	-0.408*** (0.152)
Observations	907	907	907	907
Panel B: Weight-for-height				
Exposed to Political Violence	-0.103* (0.061)	-0.539** (0.171)	-0.463** (0.197)	-0.259*** (0.108)
Observations	907	907	907	907

Note: *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

In Column 2, we add birth month-year, survey month-year, and residential cluster fixed effects to control for spatial and temporal heterogeneities such as the one mentioned above. Then, we proceed to account for the mother's attributes that could bias our results in Column 3. Highly educated mothers, for example, tend to have healthier children and are less likely to be exposed to extreme events simultaneously (Nguyen, 2018; Le and Nguyen, 2020d, 2021e, 2021f). Column 4 reports the estimates from our most extensive specification where we account for the child's characteristics in addition to the fixed effects and mother attributes. We find that experiencing political violence makes children weigh less for their age and less for their height by 0.408 and 0.259 standard deviations, respectively.

5 Conclusion

Collectively, we have found that exposure to political violence adversely affects child health in the context of El Encanto. Specifically, experiencing political violence makes children weigh less for their age and less for their height by 0.408 and 0.259 standard deviations, respectively. Political violence is seen as an obstacle to our progress toward sustainable development and a threat to global peace, and reduce people's quality of life in many ways, such as increasing sicknesses, reducing earnings, and deteriorating educational outcomes (Huong et al., 2021; Le and Nguyen 2020a; Hang et al., 2021). Thus, quantifying the impacts of violent exposure on child health might add to our understanding of the violence-human health nexus, allowing governments to implement necessary solutions quickly.

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