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In utero exposure to the Korean War and its long-term effects on socioeconomic and health outcomes

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Abstract

Prenatal exposure to the disruptions caused by the Korean War (1950–1953) negatively affected the individual socioeconomic and health outcomes at older ages. The educational attainment, labor market performance, and other socioeconomic outcomes of the subjects of the 1951 birth cohort, who were *in utero* during the worst time of the war, were significantly lower in 1990 and in 2000. The results of difference-in-difference estimations suggest that the magnitude of the negative cohort effect is significantly larger for individuals who were more seriously traumatized by the war. Whereas the 1950 male birth cohort exhibited significantly higher disability and mortality rates at older age, the health outcomes of females are unaffected by the war. Different aspects of human capital (*e.g.*, health and cognitive skills) were impaired by *in utero* exposure to the war, depending on the stage of pregnancy when the negative shocks

were experienced.



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JEL classification

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