

The Causal Relationship Between Obesity and Employment: An Analysis for Turkey

Didem Pekkurnaz

Baskent University, Turkey
dpekkurnaz@baskent.edu.tr

Abstract

Obesity has been linked to various negative health consequences such as some types of cancers (e.g., liver, kidney and breast) and cardiovascular diseases. Apart from these health effects, obesity may cause job and income loss due to two main reasons. Firstly, obese workers may be less productive at work and so less likely to be employed. Secondly, obese people may be discriminated against by employers (discrimination against physical appearance and/or prejudice against the productivity of obese people). In Turkey, 24.8% of women are obese as of 2019 and there has been a 6.3% increase from 2008. Although there have been various studies in the literature investigating the relationship between adult obesity and labor market outcomes, only a few studies investigate this topic for Turkey. However, none of them analyzes the causal impact of obesity on labor market outcomes. This work aims to show the causal effect of obesity on employment outcomes for women in Turkey. For this purpose, micro-level national representative data on women of reproductive ages are used. In order to control for the endogeneity of obesity, several instruments are employed. They are composed of area level variables such as prevalence of obesity in the area and health care resources available in the area. Estimation results reveal important policy implications.

Keywords: Obesity, Women, Employment

JEL Codes: I10, I12, J21