

Health Status and Functional Limitations in a National Sample of Elderly Mexicans

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Abstract

The Soldo et al. paper deals with the implicit effects of selection on health and mortality comparisons of Mexicans living in the US and those living in Mexico (with or without migration experience in the US.) This theme was explored theoretically in Palloni et al and is another paper where the Hispanic paradox is more directly described as an artifact of selection. The paper includes consideration of modeling choice which should guide the approach we take in the future for the analysis of mortality and health status (Palloni and Morenoff, 2001).

As part of the central theme of this paper we examine age and gender patterns of health status utilizing two indicators: self reported health and presence of at least one ADL. Preliminary analyses suggest three regularities:

(a) age patterns that are robust, quite regular and consistent with expectations. So much so, that they can be described using a Brass logit system and a simple, two parameter representation

(b) gender patterns clearly favor males: females fare worse both in terms of self-reported health and in terms of ADL. Our analyses do not succeed in clarifying exactly which of several alternative mechanisms accounts for the unexpected but observed gender disparities

(c) the absolute levels of health in Mexico, as assessed by both self-reported health and presence of at least one ADL, are somewhat higher than what they are age peers in the US and very close to the average found among elderly in seven countries in Latin America.