

Critical Summary:

Mother's education, learning by doing, and child health care in rural India

Lee, Sang-Hyop and Andrew Mason. (2005) Mother's Education, Learning-by-Doing, and Child Health Care in Rural India. *Comparative Education Review*, 49: 534-551.

Sang-Hyop Lee is a professor of Economics at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. In Lee's article, *Mother's Education, Learning-by-Doing, and Child Health Care in Rural India*, he explores the effects that a mother's education has on the health care of her children. A mother's education, alongside prenatal care and quality of life, are examined in an effort to explain the differing rates of immunization and health care which occur among young children in rural India.

Three different types of education received by mothers were analyzed in regard to their influence on the immunization of children. The first type of education was a mother's acquired level of general education. This may have exposed them to health related issues. The second type of education was mass media, such as radio and public service announcements. Here, mothers' could have learned about immunization and its health benefits. The third type of education examined was "learning by doing." Children were more likely to be immunized if their mother had prior experience with the health care system. Using these three styles of learning, Lee investigates the relationship between a mother's education and her child's health care.

In addition to the mother's education, there were other factors that correlated with immunization rates. Among these factors a child's gender is included. The mother's level of education and personal preference for a child's gender were factors that influenced how much care a child received from its mother. In many parts of India, male children are more valued than female children. The data in the article showed that male

children were far more likely to be fully vaccinated than female children. The selected sex of vaccinated children was also directly associated with the mother's level of education. Less educated mothers were more likely to have only sons immunized. In addition to gender affecting a mother's decision to immunize her child, many mothers immunized their children as a means of compensating for a child's health problems. A difficult birth was a common reason for the compensation of immunizations. However, as with discrimination by gender, uneducated mothers were far more likely to react to their child's health risk in a compensatory manner.

(This summary was taken from a paper written by Katie Harris a student of USU)