

Sibling mortality correlation in Kenya

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Abstract:

This paper examines whether infant and child mortality risks among successive siblings are closely correlated, and if so, whether the survival status of the preceding child is an important factor affecting infant and child mortality in Kenya. The data were drawn from the 1988/89 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey. Logistic regression was used as the major method of data analysis. The results show that both infant and child mortality rates are significantly higher among subsequent children whose preceding siblings had died in infancy than for those whose preceding sibling had survived through infancy. The effect of the survival status of the preceding child on infant mortality was statistically strong, even after a large number of control variables were taken into account. However, its effect on child mortality appears to be spurious since it was rendered statistically insignificant when just a few control variables were introduced into the analysis. The results provide empirical evidence that infant and child mortality risks among successive siblings are closely correlated in Kenyan families, and that the effect of the survival status of the preceding child is important in determining infant mortality but not child mortality.