Excess Female Infant Mortality and the Gender Gap in Infant Care in Bihar, India

Feminist Economics

This paper analyzes excess female infant mortality and the gender gap in infant care in the East-Central state of Bihar, India. Using pooled data from three waves of the National Family Health Surveys (1992–3; 1998–9; 2005–6), it compares female infant mortality rates in Bihar to those in thirteen major Indian states. These results suggest that females in Bihar experience a statistically significant excess infant mortality when compared to female infants in less gender-biased states. Gender gap in Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccination is the most important driver of excess female infant mortality, followed by gaps in vaccination for polio, diphtheria, pertussis, tuberculosis (DPT), and measles.