

Low Birthweight among Immigrants in Australia and the United Kingdom

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Abstract:

Using two nationally representative longitudinal surveys, we investigate whether the immigrant paradox in low birthweight is unique to the United States by examining evidence for Australia and the United Kingdom, two countries sharing many cultural similarities and long immigration traditions. Specifically we ask 1) do immigrant mothers have lower rates of low birthweight births than native-born mothers in these nations and, 2) among immigrant mothers, does the likelihood of a low weight birth differ by regional origin, length of residence in the host country, and mothers' acculturation. Our study innovates in three ways: first, we examine the immigrant advantage in a comparative framework; second, we use non-linear measures of host country duration; and finally, we introduce country of origin and origin country low birthweight among the covariates of interest. For Australia we find no evidence of an immigrant advantage in low birthweight; however, in the UK foreign-born status is protective against low birthweight, albeit differentially by race.

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