

**The Effect of Divorce on Health in Middle and Older Ages**

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**March, 2012**

A substantial literature shows that unmarried persons have health disadvantages that differ by gender, health outcome, and non-marital state. Divorce is associated with ill health for men, but the results for women are mixed. Studies have not estimated effects of marital status on self-reported health in mid-life using longitudinal data to control for marital selection with individual fixed effects.

We use the Health and Retirement Study (1992-2010) to estimate effects of divorce on self-reported health. We find evidence of adverse effects of divorce on health for women, but modest (or no) effects for men. In models with individual fixed effects, divorce is associated with an increase in the probability of reporting “bad” health for women, but not men. Examining several diseases and conditions, we also identify associations between divorce and mental health issues. Planned analyses will link couples to study within-couple differences in the health effects of divorce.