



Lunchtime seminar: Effect of Widowhood on Family Care Cost in the Chinese Elderly Population



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The Shaw Foundation Building, AS7 Level 6

Abstract

Objective: How to take care of the large group of widowed elders is a major challenge for China which holds the largest aging population in the world. This is the first study trying to estimate how widowhood transition of the Chinese elderly may affect costs of family care delivered by adult children.

Method: We analyzed a unique longitudinal parent-child dyads data (parents aged 65-105 years, children aged 35-65 years, $n=4,364$) of the Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey (CLHLS) conducted in 2002 and 2005. The family care costs were measured by the provision of financial assistance and informal care from adult children. Multiple Logit and Tobit regression models were used for estimation.

Results: We found solid evidences for the substantial rise of family care cost due to the transition to widowhood among the Chinese elderly. The likelihood and amount of the informal care and financial support from family members are all higher for widowed than for non-widowed elderly, which is not only shown at different age groups, but also approved through models controlling for various covariates. We also observed significant gender and rural/urban disparities in the effect of widowhood on family care costs.

Conclusion: More policy efforts should be put for supporting the widowed elderly in China through alleviating the burden of their family members.

Speaker biography

Dr. Feng Qiushi received his PhD degree in sociology at Duke University in 2009, and then worked as a post-doc research associate at the Duke University Medical Center from 2009 to 2011. His fields include aging studies, medical sociology, economic sociology, comparative and historical sociology, and demography. His scholarships appear at Journal of Americal Geriatrics Society, Journal of Gerontology: Social Science, Journal of Public Health, Journal of Aging and Health, Stroke, Arthritis Care & Research, and International Journal of Market Research.

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