

Effect of Excess Body Weight on Labor Market Outcomes

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Abstract:

One strand of literature investigates the effect of excess body weight on labor market outcomes. Mainly two mechanisms explain this effect: productivity loss at work and discrimination against excess body weight. 24.8% of women in Turkey are obese as of 2019 (with a 6.3% points increase from the year 2008). Although there have been several papers analyzing the determinants of obesity, the effect of excess body weight on labor market outcomes is neglected in the literature for Turkey. This is the first paper, to the author's knowledge, aiming to estimate the effect of body weight on labor market outcomes for women in Turkey. A nationally representative data set is used for this purpose. Labor market outcomes include categories of being unemployed, employed and out of labor force, working with social security or not, working in the public or private sector and working in the agricultural, industry or service sector. The effects of a continuous measure of body weight, body mass index (BMI), as well as the obesity prevalence (i.e., for $BMI \geq 30$) on the labor market outcomes are investigated. Preliminary results show that an increase in BMI decreases the likelihood of being employed and working in the private sector while increasing the likelihood of being out of labor force. The same results hold for the effect of the obesity variable. In addition, obese women are shown to have lower chances of working in the service sector and with social security.

Keywords: Obesity, Labor Market, Women

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