

This video is a presentation discussing the effects of conditional cash transfer programs (CCTs), specifically the Juntos program in Peru, on maternal fertility. It explores how these anti-poverty programs, which provide financial assistance to low-income households based on children's health and education criteria, may influence women's fertility choices.

Key points include:

1. **Objective of the Research**: The study aimed to understand the causal mechanisms through which conditional cash transfers might influence parental fertility, particularly since existing literature primarily focused on adolescent fertility without delving deeply into parental effects.
2. **Concerns about CCTs**: There is concern that linking cash transfers to children could incentivize higher fertility rates, potentially perpetuating cycles of poverty, especially in high-fertility contexts.
3. **Program Details**: Juntos is a national CCT program initiated in Peru in 2005, providing monthly transfers of around 100 soles (~\$25) to poor households with pregnant women or children under 14. Beneficiaries must meet conditionalities related to education and health.
4. **Context and Evidence**: The study highlights the prevalence of excess fertility, where households have more children than desired, indicating unmet contraceptive needs. Previous studies suggest that CCTs can reduce adolescent fertility, but evidence on their effects on parents is limited and mixed.
5. **Methodology**: The researchers utilized demographic and health surveys to analyze fertility outcomes among women eligible for the program, contrasting them with similar women in non-beneficiary regions. They employed an event study design to understand the impact of program rollout over time.
6. **Findings**: The results showed a significant reduction in total fertility by approximately 0.14 fewer births per woman in treated districts, primarily from reduced unplanned pregnancies. The estimated national reduction in births since the program's inception is around 175,000, indicating a positive impact on maternal and child welfare.
7. **Mechanisms of Impact**: Investigating potential mechanisms, the study concluded that the reduced fertility was not due to changes in parental preferences for family size or increased decision-making power for women. Instead, the increased access to and use of reproductive health services was a significant factor.
8. **Policy Implications**: The findings suggest that anti-poverty programs like CCTs can lead to unanticipated benefits, such as improved fertility outcomes, and highlight the importance of considering long-term and intergenerational effects in program evaluations.
9. **Future Research Directions**: The study calls for deeper exploration into how CCTs empower women, including their roles in decision-making and access to reproductive health, particularly in contexts of high fertility.

The overall conclusion emphasizes that while traditional measures of empowerment may not capture the complete picture, there is a likely empowerment effect as evidenced by reduced excess fertility and improved access to contraceptive methods.