Rural-urban differentials in under-five child mortality
Empirical evidence from Ethiopia

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Abstract

Background: In Ethiopia, child mortality rate under the age of five was higher in rural areas than the urban areas. However, little has been known about the factors that explain rural-urban differentials in child mortality rate under the age of five.

Methods: Data from the three Demographic and Health Surveys conducted in 2005, 2011, and 2016 in Ethiopia was analysed using a binary logistic regression to examine the association between factors and under-five child mortality using. In addition, Fairlie's decomposition technique was also applied to identify the relative contribution of individual factors to rural-urban differentials in under-five child mortality.

Results: The rural-urban gap in child under-five mortality was explained by the distributions of the covariates between rural and urban areas. The child's birth size, maternal education, household size, and mothers' exposure to mass media contributed to narrowing the disparity in child mortality rate. Whereas, antenatal healthcare services and share of women use of modern contraceptives also contributed to widening the rural-urban differentials.

Conclusions: Although under-five child mortality reduced in Ethiopia, profound variations persisted between rural and urban areas. Thus, in addition to strengthening the health extension programme in rural areas, substantial efforts must also be made to improve women's education and women's antenatal healthcare services.

Keywords: Decomposition, differentials, Ethiopia, mortality, Oaxaca-Blinder, rural–urban, under-five child

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