



Family transitions into and out of poverty and change in children's diets in the early years

A lecture by Valeria Skafida

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Tuesday 9th October 2012 , 4.00-5.30pm

University of Edinburgh, 2nd Floor (Room S.1), 7 George Square,
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Qualitative research on poverty and children's diets has explored the difficulties parents face in feeding children on a low income. Yet, there is little longitudinal and nationally representative evidence on how transitions into and out of poverty link to changes in children's diets in early childhood. Using longitudinal data from the Growing Up in Scotland cohort study, this research explores how family transitions into and out of poverty during the first 5 years of children's lives relate to changes in their dietary quality during this period. Using repeated measures, changes in family poverty status at ages 2 and 5 are used to predict changes in children's dietary quality at ages 2 and 5, when controlling for confounders. The analysis compares coefficients from Random Effects (RE) and Fixed Effects (FE) models, and explores the potential benefits of using mixed models, specifically Hausman-Taylor (HT) estimation, as a way to explore both endogenous and exogenous time-varying predictors, and simultaneously look at coefficients of time-constant predictors not observable in FE models. This is methodologically interesting since HT models may offer some significant advantages to both RE and FE models, but they are more common in econometrics and rarely used in the social sciences.

Valeria's doctoral and post-doctoral research has focused on children's diets from birth through to early childhood within the context of family life in Scotland. By using longitudinal survey data she is looking at how children's diets change over time. Her research is interdisciplinary and straddles the fields of Public Health, Social Policy, and Medical Sociology.

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