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"Timing of College Enrollment and Family Formation Decisions"

Abstract

It is likely that the extent of progression in the educational system affects whether or not one decides to start a family at a given point in time. We estimate the effect of enrolling in college in the year of application on later family formation decisions such as the probability of being a parent at a certain age. Using college admission data and the fact that many educations have binding capacity constraints in a given year, we find that individuals who are above the grade requirement for their preferred education are more likely to enroll in college. Employing an IV strategy based on this idea, we find that college enrollment does affect family formation decisions, and, for example, we find that the effect of enrolling in college on the probability of being a parent at age 27 is about 8 percentage points.

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