



Jacobs Center Seminar Series

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Global Prevalence and Determinants of Child Corporal Punishment

We present global evidence on child maltreatment and document that corporal punishment practices are widespread. Corporal punishment is more prevalent in the global south and low- and medium income countries. At the family level we find that parental personality traits and stress are key predictors of child maltreatment. Neurotic parents tend to use physical discipline more, while conscientious and agreeable parents are less likely to do so. Financial stress is also a robust predictor of corporal punishment, especially in developing countries. In the second part of the paper, we study causal determinants and investigate how banning corporal

punishment in public institutions and private households affects corporal punishment of children and parenting practices of the next generation. Using event study approaches, we study the consequences of banning corporal punishment. We find that banning corporal punishment in the public or private sphere has no immediate or delayed impact on child punishment. Banning corporal punishment also does not seem to break the intergenerational cycle of child maltreatment. Parents that experienced schooling without corporal punishment do not become less likely to physically discipline their children.

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