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Market Outcomes in Urban Ghana

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Rachel Heath *

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Abstract

While it is commonly assumed that fertility decreases female labor supply, I show theoretically that fertility can increase female labor supply if returns to financial inputs in children are sufficiently high compared to returns to time investments. Using six rounds of a panel survey from urban Ghana, I find evidence of countervailing effects behind a net zero effect of young children on women's hours of work: labor supply on the extensive margin drops, but women who remain in the labor force increase their hours in response to a child. Women's labor supply particularly increases in response to a young child if there are older siblings or other adults in the household. By contrast, men's labor supply does not change in response to young children.

Keywords: labor supply, fertility, children, gender, Ghana

JEL Classifications: J13, J22, O12

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