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The impacts of the global financial crisis on hospitalizations due to depressive illnesses in Taiwan: A prospective nationwide population-based study

Chiachi Bonnie Lee¹, Chen-Mao Liao², Chih-Ming Lin^{3, 4*}

¹Department of Health Services Administration, College of Public Health, China Medical University, Taichung, Taiwan

²Department of Applied Statistics and Information Science, Ming Chuan University, Taoyuan, Taiwan

³Department of Healthcare Information and Management, Ming Chuan University, Taoyuan, Taiwan

⁴Department of Health and Welfare Policy, University of Taipei, Taipei, Taiwan

* **Corresponding author at:** No.5, Teh-Ming Rd., Gwei-Shan, Taoyuan City, 333, Taiwan, ROC. Tel: +886 3 350 7001x3530; fax: +886 3 3593880. cmlin@mail.mcu.edu.tw

Abstract

Background:

In the third quarter of 2008, a major financial crisis hit many developed countries. Taiwan suffered its own share: a rise in unemployment and a severe decline in gross domestic product. This study is to address the health consequences of this crisis on different socioeconomic populations in Taiwan.

Methods:

A sample of 6,225,766 men and 5,417,651 women, was obtained and their admissions data over 2007 to 2012 were retrieved. Stratified into three income levels, the sample was examined on the 147,921 episodes of hospitalization due to depressive illnesses (DIs) over that period by an *interrupted time series analysis* for monthly incidence rates of DI hospitalizations

Results:

The adjusted incidence rates of hospitalization (AIRH) for DIs among the low income were 10 times that of the high income group. The AIRHs were generally higher in all of three female income groups than they were in the three male income groups. The low income men and women showed increases (of 18.0% and 14.2%, respectively) beginning in April 2008 that sustained for two years. The high income women exhibited a 5.0% monthly rise in the rate of DI hospitalizations.

Limitations:

Our time series models can control some confounding factors, but the ecological fallacy remained.

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