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Job loss, firm-level heterogeneity and mortality:

Evidence from administrative data

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Abstract

This paper estimates the effect of job loss on mortality for older male workers with a strong labor force attachment. Using Dutch administrative data, we find that job loss due to firm closure increased the probability of death within five years by a sizable 0.60 percentage points. Importantly, this effect is estimated using a model that controls for firm-level worker characteristics, such as lagged firm-level annual average mortality rates. On the mechanism driving the effect of job loss on mortality, we provide evidence for an effect running through stress and changes in life style.

JEL classification: C21, I10, J63

Keywords: job loss, mortality, treatment effect

1. Introduction

Job loss is a frequent event that many individuals experience in their lives. From January 2013 through December 2015, there were about 3.2 million workers displaced from jobs they had held for at least 3 years in the United States alone (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). First-order effects on workers' economic circumstances may be due to the associated income loss that can have long-lasting, permanent effects (Jacobson, LaLonde, and Sullivan, 1993; Couch and Placzek, 2010). Job loss, and in particular, layoffs, can be associated with strong effects on people's lives in general and health in

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