



The Short-Term Impacts of a Schooling Conditional Cash Transfer Program on the Sexual Behavior of Young Women

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Country	Malawi
Organizing Theme	Voice and Agency
Status	Midline Complete
Intervention Category	Cash Transfer
Sector	Social Protection
Abstract	<p>Recent evidence suggests that conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs for schooling are effective in raising school enrolment and attendance. However, there is also reason to believe that such programs can affect other outcomes, such as the sexual behavior of their young beneficiaries. Zomba Cash Transfer Program is a randomized ongoing CCT intervention targeting young women in Malawi that provides incentives (in the form of school fees and cash transfers) to current schoolgirls and recent dropouts to stay in or return to school. An average offer of US\$10/ month conditional on satisfactory school attendance – plus direct payment of secondary school fees – led to significant declines in early marriage, teenage pregnancy, and self-reported sexual activity among program beneficiaries after just one year of program implementation. For program beneficiaries who were out of school at baseline, the probability of getting married and becoming pregnant declined by more than 40 and 30%, respectively. In addition, the incidence of the onset of sexual activity was 38% lower among all program beneficiaries than the control group. Overall, these results suggest that CCT programs not only serve as useful tools for improving school attendance but may also reduce sexual activity, teen pregnancy, and early marriage.</p>
Gender Connection	Gender Focused Intervention
Gender Outcomes	School enrollment, decision making over family formation, fertility
IE Design	Clustered Randomized Control Trial (Clustered at Enumeration Area level)
Intervention	The CCT was an offer of approximately \$10/month for 10 months which represents about 15% of the total monthly household consumption in the sample at baseline. Secondary school fees were paid directly to schools if girls were enrolled. About 30% of the transfer went to the guardian and the rest went to the girl.
Intervention Period	2007-2009
Sample population	The sample is comprised of 3805 girls from 176 Enumeration Areas in the Zomba district of Malawi. The girls were between the age of 13-22 and were selected from door to door surveying.
Comparison conditions	Control enumeration areas did not receive the CCT
Unit of analysis	Individual level
Evaluation Period	2007-2009



Results	The program led to large statistically significant increases in enrollment, particularly among those who were not enrolled at baseline. The program reduced dropout rates by 35%, from 10.9% among control to 7% among the treated. The program reduced the propensity to get married for those who dropped out, but had no effect on girls who remained in school. The treatment group experienced a 30% reduction in pregnancies over the last year. Sexual activity was reduced by 47% for dropouts and 31.3% for schoolgirls. The program had no impact on self-reported condom use. Treated schoolgirls are much less likely to be participating in risky sexual behaviors, but there is no impact on sexual behaviors for dropouts.
Primary study limitations	Due to selection bias, it is impossible to answer the question, "for the population of young women who would be sexually active in the absence of the program, what would the effect of the program have been on their sexual behavior?"
Funding Source	Spanish Impact Evaluation Fund
Reference(s)	Baird, S., Chirwa, E., McIntosh, C., & Özler, B. (2010). The short-term impacts of a schooling conditional cash transfer program on the sexual behavior of young women. <i>Health economics</i> , 19(S1), 55-68.
Link to Studies	http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/hec.1569/abstract
Microdata	http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/1005 http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/1005