



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Empirical essays on education and health

van Ewijk, R.J.G.

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

van Ewijk, R. J. G. (2009). Empirical essays on education and health.

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Empirical Essays on Education and Health

ISBN 978 90 9024538 6

© 2009 R.J.G. van Ewijk, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Empirical Essays on Education and Health

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor

aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam

op gezag van de Rector Magnificus

Prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom

ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties

ingestelde commissie,

in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel der Universiteit

op dinsdag 20 oktober 2009, te 14.00 uur

door Reyn Joris Gerard van Ewijk

geboren te Nijmegen

PROMOTIECOMMISSIE

Promotor: prof. dr. H. Oosterbeek
Co-promotor: prof. dr. P.J.C. Slegers

Overige leden: dr. H.L.F. de Groot
prof. dr. S. Karsten
dr. S. McNally
prof. dr. E.J.S. Plug
dr. T.J. Roseboom

Faculteit der Economie en Bedrijfskunde

Acknowledgements

Working on the thesis that lies before you, has enabled me to combine several of my long-standing passions: doing quantitative applied research, blending knowledge and techniques from different fields, and working on socially relevant topics. I started my PhD at the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, where my research focused on education, particularly on the effects of school composition on achievement (peer effects). The results of this initial period appear in the last two chapters of this thesis. But at the same time, I also had a supervisor at the Faculty of Economics and Business and I attended courses at the Tinbergen Institute's research master in Economics, which proved to be very valuable and stimulating for me. Reading not only social scientific, but also economic literature, my research interests gradually turned more and more into the direction of economics. When, about halfway during my PhD, Hessel Oosterbeek asked me if I would like to have an office at his Economics of Education group, I did not need to hesitate. A large part of my research here remained focused on educational issues, as Chapter 3 bears witness to. But, like in the previous projects, an interdisciplinary focus remained. Studying whether teachers give ethnic minority students different grades for the same work than they would have given to ethnic majority students, I tried to combine economic research with psychological theories. My last research project (which appears in Chapter 2), went into a somewhat different direction. Initially intending to study a more education-related topic, I stumbled on results that I found too exciting and important to leave them for what they were, but which were not related to education anymore, but only to health. Thanks to the support of my supervisors, I was able to pursue this research on the long-term health effects on the next generation of Ramadan fasting during pregnancy further. This project, finally, brought me into a field of overlap between econometric research methods and medical theories.

There are many people that I would like to thank for their help and support during my PhD work in general, or for their contributions to one of the four essays that together constitute this PhD thesis. Let me start with thanking those people who contributed to specific chapters. For Chapter 2, I would like to thank Douglas Almond, David Barker, Monique de Haan, Bhashkar Mazumder, Sandra McNally, Hessel Oosterbeek and Erik Plug for their helpful comments and suggestions. I gratefully acknowledge comments from seminar participants at the National Islamic University (UIN) in Jakarta, Indonesia, the London School of Economics, the Chicago Federal Reserve Bank and the University of Amsterdam Medical Center (AMC). I thank my Indonesian hosts, particularly the people from UIN and Dwi Tyastuti for their great help in organizing the interviews and visits I made during Ramadan 2008. Tessa Roseboom, who leads the "Fetal origins of adult disease" research programme at the University of Amsterdam Medical Center (AMC), I thank for her expert advice on the medical theory described in this paper.

For Chapter 3, I would like to thank Adam Booij, Monique de Haan, Charlotte Dignath, Maresa Sprietsma, Hessel Oosterbeek, Erik Plug and Peter Slegers for

discussion and suggestions and seminar participants at the 2009 EEEPE meeting for their useful comments. I thank Harm Kluter and Mirjam van der Geijs for their help in collecting the essays and Amos van Gelderen from the University of Amsterdam's Educational Department for his advice on writing/grading instructions for students and teachers.

Chapter 4 and 5 are joint work with Peter Slegers. For both chapters, we would like to thank Sjoerd Karsten, Hessel Oosterbeek and Erik Plug for their insightful comments and suggestions. Also, for Chapter 4, we thank Helen Ladd for her comments.

Then there are also many people that I am grateful to for their help and support during my PhD project in general. Hessel Oosterbeek, Peter Slegers and Sjoerd Karsten, I thank for their advice and encouragement and also for giving me the opportunity to pursue my own interests and those topics that intrigued me most, while continuing to support me. Peter, I thank for making me enthusiastic for the research project and thus convincing me to start my PhD. I also thank him for his co-authorships and for all his enthusiasm. Hessel, I thank for his countless valuable suggestions and advices, for always being available when I needed to discuss my research and for all his efforts in helping me to improve my work. Also, I am grateful for his efforts to convince me that the economics department was the right one for me.

Erik Plug, though formally not one of my supervisors, was always available for advice, to proofread my manuscripts and to give sharp, to-the-point critiques. I am very grateful for this. All the other people at our economics department, I thank for all our lunch and coffee breaks, which helped making my PhD time an enjoyable experience, and also for making our department a very stimulating research environment. Without wanting to do injustice to the others, I would especially like to mention Monique and Adam here, my closest "peers" – to put it in the terms of the last two chapters – who will be my paranimfs, and with whom I had many stimulating discussions on research. For the earlier part of my PhD project, I thank my colleagues in the education department.

I'd like to thank Steve Machin for inviting me to the London School of Economics and Sandra McNally for all her support and valuable advice during and after my stay at LSE. All my colleagues at LSE I thank for making my stay there a great experience.

Many thanks go to my friends, and to my brother Gijs who helped me by giving me the necessary distraction and by their interest in my work. A special word of thanks is for my parents, for all the support and encouragement they have given me. Finally, Charlotte, I not only thank for her feedback to my presentations and critical comments on my work, but most of all for her love and for always being there for me. Without her, working on this thesis would not have been the same.