Domestic Violence and Employment: Fixed Effects Models of Three Waves of Women’s Employment Study Data*

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Abstract

Domestic violence can interfere with women’s ability to work, and may result in loss of welfare benefits and poorer economic outcomes. Previous studies showing no effect of domestic violence on employment could be a result of the failure to control for some individual characteristics, therefore we use fixed-effects models with three waves of Women's Employment Study (WES) data to control for unobservable time-invariant individual-specific characteristics. Included in our analyses were 598 women, from an urban county in Michigan who were on the welfare rolls in February of 1997, all of whom completed three waves of interviews. Our fixed effects regression results show that domestic violence significantly reduced the annual work hours of a respondent. Mental and physical health problems do not completely mediate this relationship. Our results support efforts to address domestic violence within the welfare system.

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