

Health Selection and Trajectories of Immigrants in Canada and the United States

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Abstract

Canada and the US are countries with long histories of immigration but different immigration and integration policies as well as health systems. The present study examines the health selection and health trajectories of immigrants in the two countries and how the differences may be understood by destination contextual factors. We first use 10 years of NHIS and CCHS data to study relative health selection of immigrants. Specifically, we compare a range of health indicators of very recent immigrants from the same regions of origin in the two countries. Results seem to be aligned with the speculation that the more skilled-based Canadian immigration policy has led to a greater degree of positive health selection among immigrants, especially for objective health measures such as chronic health conditions. In the meantime, however, we also find a significant difference in self-reported health favoring US immigrants. In the next steps of our study, we will adjudicate between several plausible explanations for the differential health selection. We will also conduct comparative analysis of the health trajectories of immigrants at the two destinations.