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Policy interventions against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in developing countries: What are their micro-economic effects?

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HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria remain the leading causes of morbidity and mortality, primarily in developing countries. However, besides the health burden, these diseases also have negative macro-economic effects due to decreased economic growth, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. At the micro-economic level these effects are much more evident such as issues caused by loss of wages and lower monthly income; absenteeism from education and work; cost of treatment; and other expenses involved with care and transportation to health centres. Researching these micro-economic effects is the objective of this systematic review, this in order to disseminate to policy-makers both in developing and developed nations; as well as other global health stakeholders. To do this we conducted searches on several health and economic databases, following the Cochrane methodology wherever possible. 16 studies were included and results were analysed following the Theory of Change framework, where three main drivers for change were identified: Increasing financial resources, promoting behavioural change and increasing access to treatment and other resources. We found that cash transfer incentives for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, have positive short-term effects yet these do not usually translate into long-term results. The uptake of micro-loans showed positive economic results for households, yet these interventions did not become widespread, with in some cases, a small number of eligible individuals requesting loans. Initiatives which provide greater access to treatment for these diseases have been shown to have important effects on employment and productivity, yet they must be coupled with support measures to avoid the secondary costs associated with seeking this treatment, such as transportation.

Biography

Miguel Niño-Zarazúa is a Research Fellow at the World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER). Previously, he was a Research Fellow at the Brooks World Poverty Institute and the Chronic Poverty Research Centre at the University of Manchester. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Sheffield, UK. His research interests include aid effectiveness; social protection and social sector development; poverty, inequality and vulnerability analysis; microfinance, and applied econometrics with specific focus on impact evaluation methods.

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