

1. Introduction

Abstract

This paper discusses the health system in Mexico in an integral way; focusing especially on whether the quality of the health centers affects the health outcomes of individuals, and whether perception measures are good indicators of actual health measurements. We found that health center's quality affects individual health outcomes, especially the health center's infrastructure and number of doctors available in that center. The infrastructure and number of doctors are key components of the quality of the services received by the population and appear to be more important than other elements, such as number of nurses, number of supporting personnel, specialties present in the health center and equipment. Furthermore, we found that perception measurements cannot be used instead of actual measurements. Perception measurements are strongly correlated with expenditure and socio-economic status, rather than being correlated with real health conditions.

Summarizing, this study will give answer to 3 inter-related questions: How are income and health related in Mexico? Do people receiving better medical services (of higher quality) are healthier than those receiving inferior medical services? And are own health perception and health services perception good proxies for the actual

¹ Commission on Macroeconomics and Health. Macroeconomics and health: Investing in health for economic development. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2001