Title: Gender Equality in Work and Covid-19 Deaths

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Abstract:
On average, women comprise a smaller share of deaths from Covid-19. Variation in the share of Covid-19 deaths for women across countries and US States suggests that biological factors cannot fully account for this gender difference. I hypothesize that women’s participation in the workforce is related to women’s share of Covid-19 deaths. I show that the percent of the full-time workforce comprised by women is positively related to the percent of female Covid-19 deaths across countries. I also show that the percent of the full-time workforce comprised by women is positively related to the incidence of various diseases associated with a more severe impact of Covid-19 and the percent of medical doctors and nurses who are women. My results suggest that in countries where women participate more fully in the workforce, women may be more susceptible to Covid-19 due to increased exposure to the virus and a higher risk of developing comorbidities. Future research should be careful to consider social factors when examining gender differences in health outcomes.

Data description: I collect gender disaggregated data on Covid-19 outcomes at the country and US State level along with data on women’s participation in the workforce, the incidence of disease among women and their share of the health workforce.

JEL codes for the project: J16; I14

Key-words: Covid-19; Deaths; Gender; Work; Health; Doctor