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## Institutional deficit and health outcomes in post-communist states

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### Highlights

- Democratization and economic liberalization, if implemented simultaneously during post-communist transitions, reduce overall uncertainty and thus improve health.
- People suffer less from stress-related diseases and start investing more in their own health.
- The mediation regression analysis with country and time fixed effects corroborates these hypotheses.

### Abstract

In this paper we draw upon the unique natural experiment of post-communist transitions to show how the interaction between democratization and economic liberalization impacts health. We argue that, if occurring simultaneously, these transformations reduce overall uncertainty and thus improve health. Two concrete mechanisms are at work: first, people suffer less from stress-related diseases, and second, they start investing more in their own health. To capture the proposed theoretical mechanisms, we use stress-caused mortality and private expenditures on health as our dependent variables. Empirically, we employ mediation analysis with country and time fixed effects. We find that, *ceteris paribus*, democratization and economic

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