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Abstract

Drug-overdose deaths, which have more than doubled over the past decade, represent a growing public-health concern. Though substance-abuse treatment may be effective in reducing drug abuse, evidence for a causal effect of treatment on drug-related mortality is lacking. I analyze the effect of substance-abuse treatment on mortality by exploiting county-level variation in treatment facilities driven by facility openings and closings. The estimates indicate that a 10-percent increase in facilities lowers a county's drug-induced mortality rate by 2 percent. The estimated effects persist across individual and county characteristics and further indicate that spillovers of treatment reduce other related causes of death.

Keywords: Drug Abuse; Mortality; Substance-Abuse Treatment; Public Health; Health Economics

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