Smoking, Taxes, and Pregnancy on the Iberian Peninsula

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Objectivos (Objectives): This paper uses retrospective data from the Spanish and Portuguese National Health Surveys to describe patterns in smoking over the life-course and to investigate how decisions to start and quit smoking vary with specific tobacco control policies, with measures of the local economy (unemployment rates), and with differences over time in information about the health risks of smoking.

Metodologia (Methodology): Because we use retrospective smoking information, we are able to construct life-course smoking histories for all current and former smokers. This feature of our data maximizes the size of the sample available for our analysis. More importantly, we are able to follow smoking decisions of men and women born in many different years.

Resultados (Results): Consequently we can use temporal variation in taxes and in the information about health risks of smoking that were available to each birth cohort. Coupled with the stylized fact that smokers in every country start smoking between the ages of 12 and 19, we can exploit variation in health risk information that was available during the years each cohort were these ages. We take advantage of revelations in the mid-1980s about the risks of smoking to unborn fetuses and information revealed in the 1990s on the risks of second-hand smoke to non smoking coresident family members to investigate our main focus of interest - the propensity to smoke when pregnant and in the presence of children.

Conclusões (Conclusions): We exploit temporal variation in the information about risks to children to see if that information played a role in either preventing smoking initiation or in getting Spanish and Portuguese men and women to quit smoking when a child arrived or was present in the household.