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Child Health in Nigeria: An Empirical investigation of determinants

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Background/Objectives
Poverty, inequality and health statistics for Nigeria paint a disturbing picture. Large inequalities exist in the distribution of resources and over half of the population is poor with poor health statistics. Children from poorer households are more likely to be deprived of access to basic care. Based on this, the authors attempt a construction of a composite index of selected child health variables and to assess the predictors and determinants of a child's denial or lack of access to basic child health care services.

Methods
Principal Components Analysis is used to construct an index on selected child health variables that is used to asses the deprivation of the child from basic child health care services. From the composite measure, without imposing any distributional assumption, the Kernel density estimates is used to account for inequalities in the distribution of the index as opposed to the traditional linearity assumption. Probit and OLS estimations are further used to obtain the predictors and determinants of lack of access of children to basic child health care services.

The Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire Survey data obtained by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on children was used for the analysis. The data contains information on over 42,000 children drawn from all the 36 states of Nigeria including Abuja.

Preliminary Findings
Though the study is not completed at the time of this abstract, likely determinants and predictors of a child's lack of access to basic child health care include whether the mother is the head of the family, the length of time the child was breastfed, the current age of the child, the gender of the child, the weight of the child at birth, the place of child delivery, and who actually delivered the child.