

The Importance of Prenatal Health for Future Productivity

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Acquiring Skills During Childhood

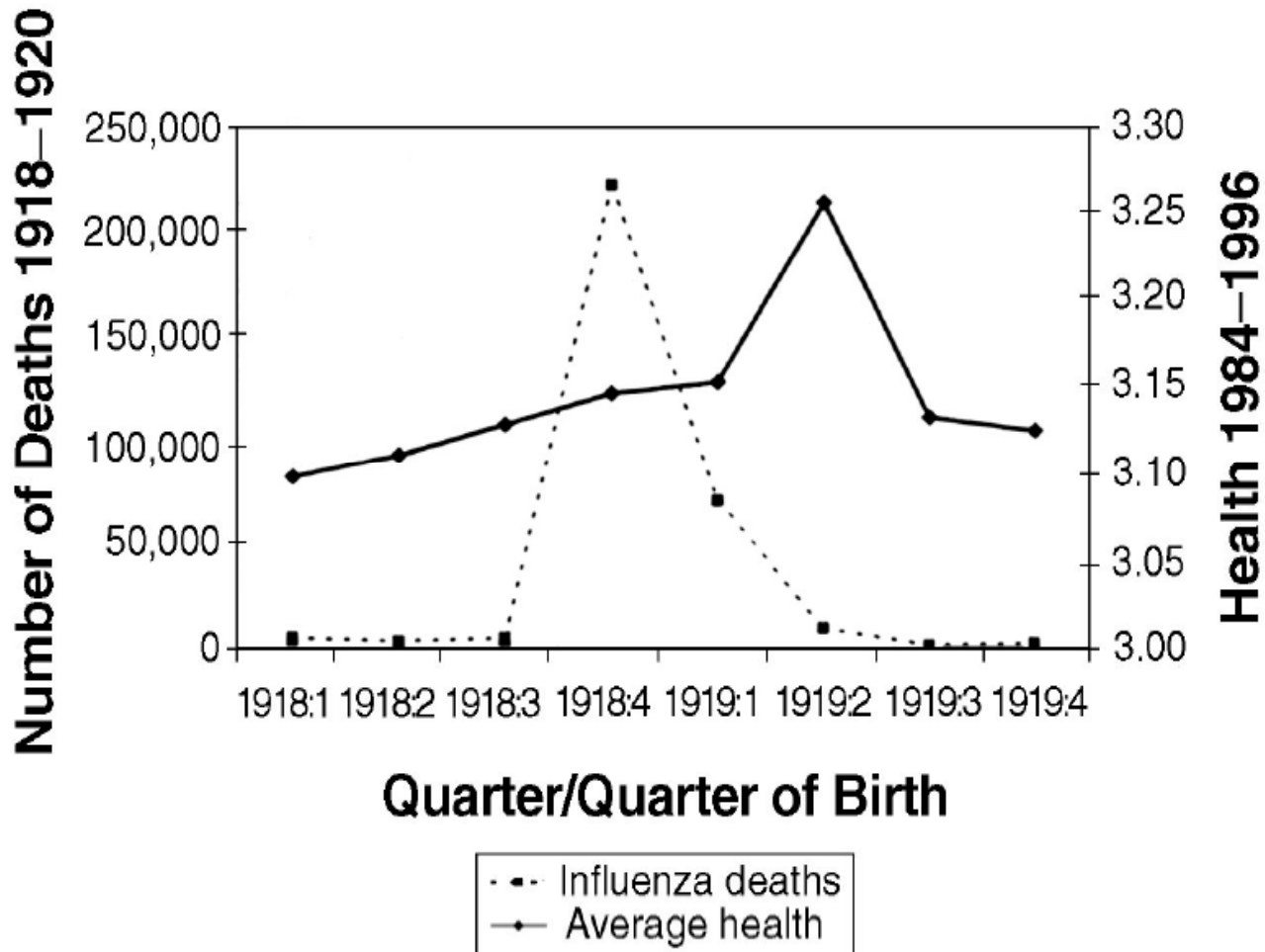
Economic returns to:

- 4-year college
- 2-year college
- Extra year of schooling
- Reduced class size in primary school
- Pre-school/Head Start
- *Prenatal period ?*

Evidence on the Importance of *In Utero* Health for Long Run Well Being

- 10% increase in birth weight leads to 1% increase in earnings
- Specific prenatal health events
 - Famine *in utero* reduces educational attainment
 - Infections *in utero* reduces education, IQ, and wages
- Will briefly highlight results from 1918 Influenza Pandemic

Pandemic peaked in late in 1918...Those *in utero* had worse health 70 years later



Long-term impacts of 1918 Influenza Pandemic

Prenatal infection:

- 20% increase in cardiovascular disease
- 15% less likely to graduate from high school
- 20% increase in likelihood prevented from working by a disability
- 5-9% lower wages

Three policy suggestions

- 1. Boosting influenza vaccination rates among women of childbearing ages**
- 2. Accelerating enrollment into existing nutrition programs**
 - First trimester has important long-term productivity effects
- 3. Facilitate early recognition of pregnancies**
 - Roughly half pregnancies not recognized until after first month
 - Recognizing a pregnancy can trigger positive behavioral changes