

Putting a price tag on air pollution: the short-term consequences of road traffic air pollution on health care use and costs in France

Julia MINK

Abstract :

Air pollution is the single largest environmental risk to the health of Europeans. The costs from treating health conditions linked to air pollution are potentially high, yet they are rarely quantified due to problems of endogeneity and lack of adequate data. I use variation in the intensity of air pollution induced by periods of strike in the public transport sector in France to estimate the causal short-term effects of air pollution on health care use and costs. I consider health care cost reimbursements from 2015 to 2019 for all types of health care consumption including physician encounters, pharmacy purchases, and hospital care for a representative sample of the French population. The daily frequency and the high spatial resolution of the data allow for an unprecedentedly fine-grained analysis.