



Health and Other Determinants of Humanitarian Migrants' Economic Participation

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This paper investigates the factors that may explain the lower labour force participation rate of immigrants who arrived in Australia on Humanitarian visas in 1999-2000 compared with similar immigrants who arrived in 1993-95. Just 41 and 13 per cent of men and women in the later cohort were in the labour force at 18 months after arrival compared with 67 and 33 per cent of men and women in the earlier cohort. Economic and labour market conditions in Australia were much better in 1999-2000 than in the mid-1990s and it was intriguing that many Humanitarian immigrants in the later cohort had not entered the labour market when economic conditions were so favourable, in contrast to immigrants in the Skilled and Family visa categories. Since Humanitarian immigrants are known to have poorer health than other immigrants, the paper examines the influence of health status on the economic participation of Humanitarian immigrants using data from the first and second Longitudinal Surveys of Immigrants to Australia. Three measures of health are available from the surveys: self-reported health status, the presence of a long-term health condition and mental health status. The second cohort of Humanitarian migrants was found to have poorer health than the first cohort on all three measures. The paper uses multivariate regression analyses to control for other factors known to affect immigrants' economic participation, such as age, skills and English language proficiency to see if the differences in health status can explain the different rates of economic participation between the two cohorts.