Abstract

This paper looks at life expectancy at birth (LEB) increase over the subsequent 10-years for 139 countries between 1950 and 2009. The 10 year change in LEB was regressed on starting LEB, GDP, total fertility rate, population density, CO$_2$ emissions, and HIV prevalence. Models used country-specific fixed effects and time-dummies. Analysis grouped countries into one-of-four strata: LEB $< 51$, $51 \leq$ LEB $< 61$, $61 \leq$ LEB $< 71$, and LEB $\geq 71$. Contrary to the expectation that advances in health technology and spending would hasten improvements in LEB, it was found that the pace-of-growth of LEB has slowed around the world. Ceiling effects do not explain why LEB growth is slower in 2009 than 1950 for countries at similar starting life expectancy and similar GDP per capita levels.