



OPINION PIECE: Immigration benefits native workers' health

In time for World Health Day tomorrow, 7 April, [IZA World of Labor](#) will be publishing a topical opinion piece by economist Osea Giuntella of the University of Oxford on the effect of immigration on the health of native workers. Giuntella argues that immigration crowds native workers out of risky jobs and into less strenuous work, with consequent benefits to their health. Please find below a shortened version of the opinion piece in advance of publication.

Immigration and native workers' health – by Osea Giuntella

The public debate on immigration tends to focus on its effects on wages and employment. It typically fails to consider the effects of immigration on working conditions that are known to affect employees' health. [...]

A 1% increase in immigration share reduces the probability of reporting a doctor-assessed disability by roughly 10% on average. The impact of immigration on native workers' health is concentrated among low-skilled and blue-collar workers. Native blue-collar workers experience a significant reduction in their average physical burden and are more likely to switch to less physically demanding jobs. This result is consistent with the idea that low-skilled natives and low-skilled immigrants are imperfect substitutes and that the increase in the number of low-skilled immigrants may push natives toward less physically demanding tasks. At the same time, while upon arrival immigrant men in Germany have a much lower incidence of doctor-assessed disability than native-born workers, their health converges to natives' health in approximately 15 years. Similar findings exist for the UK.

Overall, the evidence suggests that policymakers should not neglect the effects of immigration on non-monetary working conditions. Immigration appears to benefit native workers' health. On the other end of the spectrum, new and healthy immigrants may fail to understand the risks associated with particular working conditions and take excessive risks. Providing information and access to care to those immigrants at higher risk could reduce the negative effects on their own health and the associated costs for the health care system.

This opinion piece is based on a report by the author titled [Do immigrants improve the health of native workers?](#) previously published on IZA World of Labor. You can find latest research on subjects relating to health and well-being on the [IZA World of Labor Health Key Topic page](#).



BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING
LONDON · NEW DELHI · NEW YORK · SYDNEY

I Z A
World of Labor
Evidence-based policy making

Media Contact:

Please contact Anna von Hahn to read the opinion piece in full in advance of publication or for author interviews: anna.vonhahn@bloomsbury.com or +44 7852 882 770

Notes for editors:

IZA World of Labor (<http://wol.iza.org>) is a global, freely available online resource that provides policy makers, academics, journalists, and researchers, with clear, concise and evidence-based knowledge on labor economics issues worldwide.

The site offers relevant and succinct information on topics including diversity, migration, minimum wage, youth unemployment, employment protection, development, education, gender balance, labor mobility and flexibility among others.

Established in 1998, the Institute of Labor Economics (www.iza.org) is an independent economic research institute focused on the analysis of global labour markets. Based in Bonn, it operates an international network of about 1,500 economists and researchers spanning more than 45 countries.