

## **Beyond Baby Blues: The Child Penalty in Mental Health in Switzerland**

This paper investigates the mental health penalty for women after childbirth in Switzerland. Leveraging insurance data, we employ a staggered difference-in-difference research design. The findings reveal a substantial mental health penalty for women following the birth of their first child. Approximately four years after childbirth, there is a one percentage point (p.p.) increase in antidepressant prescriptions, six years postpartum. The mental health penalty is likely not only a direct consequence of giving birth representing a 50% increase compared to pre-birth levels. This increase rises to 1.7 p.p. (a 70% increase) but also a consequence of the changed life circumstances and time constraints that accompany it, as the penalty is rising over time and is higher for women who are employed before childbirth.