Determinants of Ramadan Fasting during Pregnancy in Germany

We are looking for a master student who will write a master thesis within our interdisciplinary cooperation project between the Department of Economics and the University Medical Center Mainz.

Background

Adverse circumstances during pregnancy can significantly affect children's health, cognitive performance, and emotional as well as educational development throughout life (Barker, 1997). In utero exposure to Ramadan has been shown to be associated with various physical and cognitive health outcomes as well as labor market outcomes. As the number of Muslims in Germany has increased to over 5% of the total population and is expected to increase further in the future, Ramadan during pregnancy is becoming an increasing concern for medical professionals in Germany. Even though most interpretations of the Q'ran allow pregnant Muslims to refrain from the Ramadan fast, many pregnant Muslims decide to fast.

Aim of the master thesis

The aim of this master thesis project is to identify in which respects Muslim women in Germany who decide to fast during pregnancy differ from Muslim women in Germany who decide not to fast during pregnancy. Moreover, you will be able to assess which advice pregnant Muslims were given by healthcare professionals and if this advice is in accordance with the state of the art of research on Ramadan during pregnancy. For further insights please see our recent publication based on a pilot study to the data you would work with: Ramadan Observance during Pregnancy in Germany: a Challenge for Prenatal Care (nih.gov). This research is very topical and results will be of interest for health care professionals in Germany.

Data & Methods

You will work with a unique dataset on pregnant Muslims during Ramadan in Mainz (including information on fasting behavior and other behavior during Ramadan, individual background characteristics, childbirth history). This is the first comprehensive dataset on Ramadan during pregnancy in Germany. Using OLS regressions, you will assess what the determinants of Ramadan fasting in Germany are. In order to evaluate your results' robustness to omitted variable bias, you will apply the Oster method.

If you are interested in writing your master thesis in our project, please contact Fabienne Pradella: fapradel@uni-mainz.de.