

Gender Bias Within Chinese Families—Who Eats First in Tough Times?

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This paper investigates within family the effects of parental income shocks on individual's dietary intake. Drawing on large-scale panel data from the China Health and Nutrition Survey from 1991 to 2011, I examine the macronutrient intakes of 2 to 17-year-old siblings of mixed-sex and their parents in 3,244 families. Gender disparity in carbohydrate intakes accounts for 15 percentage points in child sample, 30 percentage points in adolescents, and 50 percentage points between parents using the Dietary Reference Intakes standards. The paper further shows that when families experience negative income shocks, food is allocated in the order of fathers, sons, daughters and mothers. Gender inequality of intra-household resource allocation is heightened in the event of large income losses.