**The Study**

Early college high schools (ECHSs) in North Carolina are small public schools on college campuses that allow students to attain postsecondary credits and/or an associate's degree in high school.

The authors aim to understand the overall impact of early colleges on postsecondary outcomes (e.g., ACT scores, college courses completed during high school, four-year college enrollment, and two- and four-year college degree receipt) in North Carolina and how these impacts vary for students from underserved backgrounds. In this study, they use administrative data on all ECHSs in North Carolina between 2005–2006 through 2010–2011.

**Findings**

The study uses a method called cross-design synthesis to pool impacts from a randomized control trial and a quasi-experimental study. Pooled results show positive and significant impacts of ECHS attendance on postsecondary-related outcomes with minority students and economically disadvantaged students benefitting more in four-year college enrollment and graduation than their more advantaged peers. Students who were low performing in eighth grade, however, do not benefit as much as their higher performing peers. Additionally, ECHSs on four-year campuses have significantly different impacts than ECHSs on two-year campuses: Students are less likely to attend and graduate from two-year colleges but more likely to attend and graduate from four-year colleges.

**Policy Implications**

This study provides further evidence of very large and positive early college enrollment effects on associate's degree completion and modest positive effects on bachelor's degree completion while also addressing weaknesses in the external validity of prior work. Further, it points to ways to use both randomized control trial and quasi-experimental estimates to improve the external validity, and therefore, the policy relevance, of evaluation evidence.

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