

# Vaccination policy of Japanese municipalities<sup>†</sup>

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## Abstract

Japan is often perceived as “backward nation” in its immunization policy because of a delay in vaccine licensing and exclusion of some vaccines widely used in other developed countries from the national program. In this country, municipal authorities play a role in providing financial support for the voluntary vaccination. This paper examines the process of vaccination policy making by the municipal governments, focusing on the interdependency of the policy using spatial lag model based on the data in 2010. Our results are summarized as follows. First, majority of the municipalities did not offer subsidies for voluntary vaccination against Hib, PCV7, PCV23, varicella, mumps and HPV in 2010. The pattern of which vaccines are subsidized differ among municipalities, indicating no systematic priorities on vaccines across municipalities. Second, the vaccination subsidy policy is statistically significantly correlated with neighboring municipalities within the same prefecture, but not outside the prefecture. These imply that Japanese municipalities play yardstick competition within the same prefecture. Third, strong correlations between other socio-economic or fiscal characteristics of municipalities and vaccination subsidy policy are not detected.

Keywords: vaccine policy; spatial lag model; yardstick competition

JEL codes: I18, H75, H77, H71

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