Purpose

- Describe paid leave benefits afforded to working women with infants in the US
  - Including maternity leave and paid sick and vacation leave
- To examine how key SES and demographic factors are related to these benefits
- To inform the workplace policy agenda in the US and advocate for enhanced family leave benefits

BACKGROUND

Maternity leave benefits in the US

- High labor force participation rate among women with young children
- Maternity leave associated with considerable health benefits for moms and babies
- FMLA provides minimal protection
  - 12 weeks of (unpaid) job-protected leave for eligible women
  - Economic burden on low-income families

US laws provide minimal job and financial security for working women
Paid sick/vacation benefits in the US

• Paid leave is associated with improved access to health care for children
• Not a federally mandated benefit in US
• Limited research about the distribution of paid leave in US

Methods

• Listening to Mothers Survey
  • LTM Sample:
    – English-speaking women aged 18-45
    – Gave birth to a singleton baby in a US hospital in 2005
    – Wave 1 n=1,573; Wave 2 n=903 (surveyed again 6 months later)
  • Our sample:
    – Employed women (excluding self-employed)
    – Wave 1 n=882; Wave 2 n=392
  • Survey weighted multivariable linear and logistic regression

Variables

Outcome Variables
Maternity leave (Wave 1)
  - Length of maternity leave
  - Paid maternity leave
Other paid leave (Wave 2)
  - Paid sick leave
  - Paid personal leave

Predictor Variables
Maternal age
Insurance status
Education level
Partnership status
Full/Part-time status
Family income
Race/ethnicity
Region

RESULTS

Maternity leave

On average women took 10 weeks of maternity leave

% of women who took 12 weeks or less of maternity leave

- 17% 12 weeks or less
- 83% More than 12 weeks

A large proportion of women receive no paid maternity leave

• 59% of women received no pay during maternity leave
• Of those who did, average duration of paid leave was 3.3 weeks; 31% mean wage replacement
Maternity leave may be related to SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maternal Age (Ref: 18-29 years)</th>
<th>Length of maternity leave (weeks) β; 95% CI</th>
<th>Receipt of paid maternity leave OR; 95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>0.86 (-0.52, 2.24)</td>
<td>0.98 (0.59, 1.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35+</td>
<td>2.47 (0.06, 4.88)*</td>
<td>1.02 (0.56, 1.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Status (Ref: Private insurance)</td>
<td>Government/none</td>
<td>0.51 (-1.33, 2.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual family income (Ref: &lt;$35,000)</td>
<td>$35,000-$75,000</td>
<td>0.14 (-1.59, 1.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; $75,000</td>
<td>1.83 (1.05, 3.18)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity (Ref: White non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>Black non-Hispanic</td>
<td>1.44 (-0.75, 64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.17 (-0.78, 3.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-1.68 (-4.09, 0.74)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates significance at α=0.05;  ** indicates significance at α=0.01
Maternal education, region, marital status, and maternal age were not related to maternity leave

RESULTS
Paid sick and vacation leave

- On average women received 22 total days of paid leave annually
- 35% received no paid sick or vacation leave
- 28% received 1-3 weeks
- 37% received 4+ weeks

Leaves benefits may be correlated with socio-economic status indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual family income</th>
<th>Total paid leave (days) β; 95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$35,000</td>
<td>2.67 (4.03, 9.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000-$75,000</td>
<td>6.15 (0.05, 19.17)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; $75,000</td>
<td>9.61 (0.05, 19.17)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total paid leave (days) β; 95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White non-Hispanic</td>
<td>17.15 (2.88, 37.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black non-Hispanic</td>
<td>19.40 (1.60, 37.18)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4.67 (9.76, 19.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates significance at α=0.05;  ** indicates significance at α=0.01
Maternal education, insurance status, marital status, region, and maternal age were not related to total paid leave

A large proportion of women receive no paid sick and vacation leave
- 45% received no paid sick leave
- 30% received no paid vacation leave

Caveats
- Results may overestimate generosity of maternity leave benefits in US
  - women with less generous benefits may not have returned to work
- Unable to control for industry/occupation-specific characteristics
- Findings not generalizable to US population of women with children under 18 months
  - may have missed vulnerable subpopulations
Conclusions

• Compared with women in similarly developed nations, US women have fewer maternity-related benefits and take less leave.
• Women from lower income families receive fewer paid maternity and other leave benefits.
• This is a cause for concern given that paid leave and maternity leave are associated with health benefits for women and children.

Acknowledgements

• Janice Bell, co-author and Dissertation Chair
• Childbirth Connection
• Harris Interactive
• Financial support was provided by:
  – The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Grant No: 1 T42 OH008433)
  – The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health (Grant UL1 RT000423)

Thank you

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