

## **Colonial origins and hospital performance in the D.R.Congo**

### **Abstract:**

This paper explores the role of colonial medical missions in causing contemporaneous disparities in hospital performance in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Using GIS data and archival records from colonial Belgian Congo between 1929 and 1959, I investigate the effects of colonial health investments on the performance of modern health facilities. First, I document a strong, positive and persistent effect on infrastructure capacity. The ability of the colonial regime to mobilise large health investments and skilled resources appears to be a strong channel of persistence of the colonial effect. Second, I find that contemporaneous resources allocated by the central government to hospitals are substantially higher for hospitals with a colonial origin, even after controlling for differences in hospital ownership, staffing and bed capacity.