Scars of Youth - The Effects of Early-Career Unemployment on Future Unemployment Experiences

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Does early-career unemployment cause future unemployment? We answer this question with German administrative matched employer-employee data that allow us to follow 800,000 individuals over 24 years. Using a censored quantile instrumental variable estimator and instrumenting early-career unemployment with local labor market conditions at labor market entry, we show that youth unemployment has significant and long-lasting scarring effects. These effects are especially pronounced in the right tail of the unemployment distribution where an additional day of youth unemployment increases prime-age unemployment by up to six and a half days.