Health consequences of pension policy reforms across countries: historical antecedents and current developments

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Research Question: What pension policy changes are potentially associated with health changes? Are there ecological associations between pension policy and health changes over time across the globe?
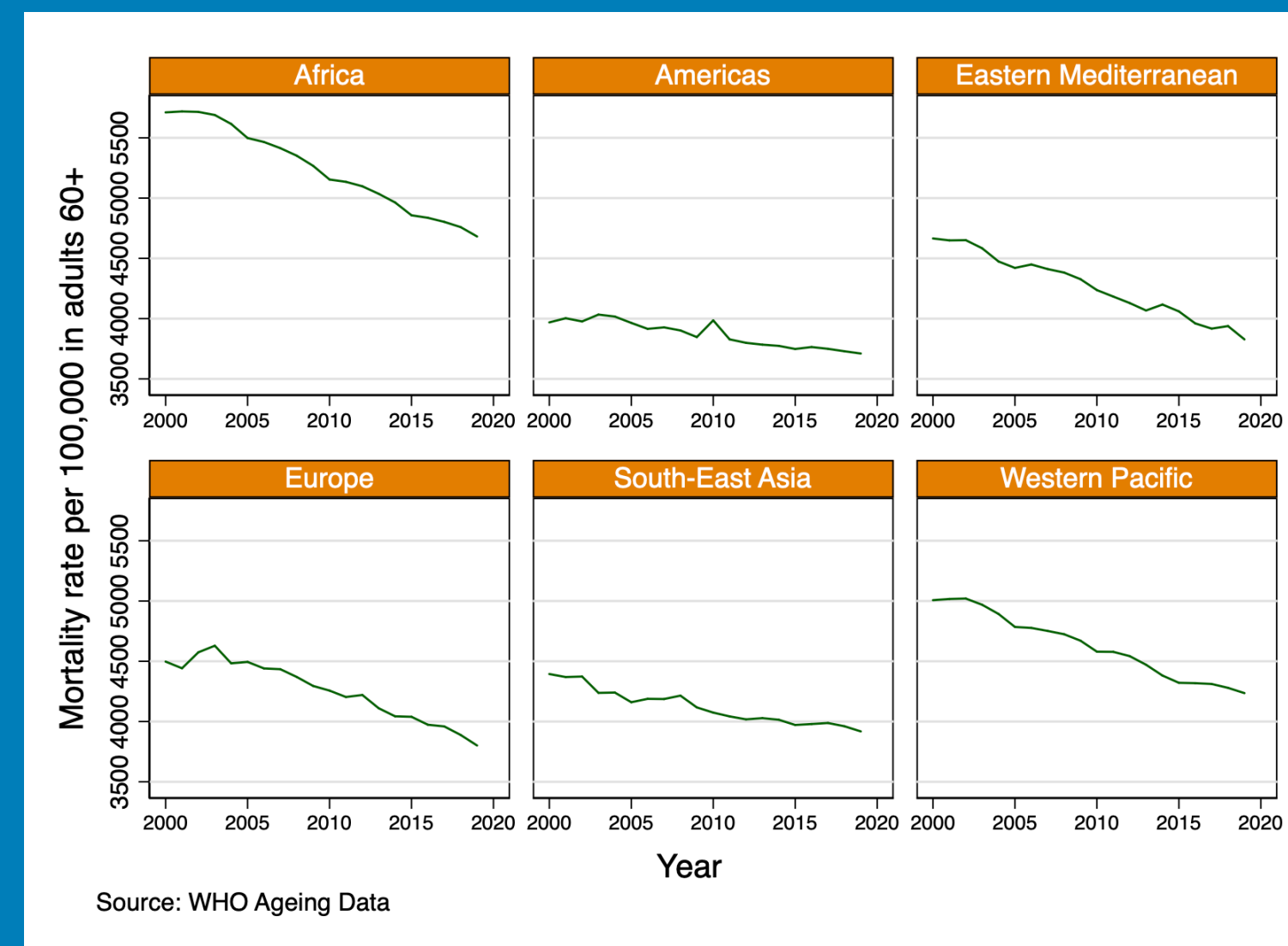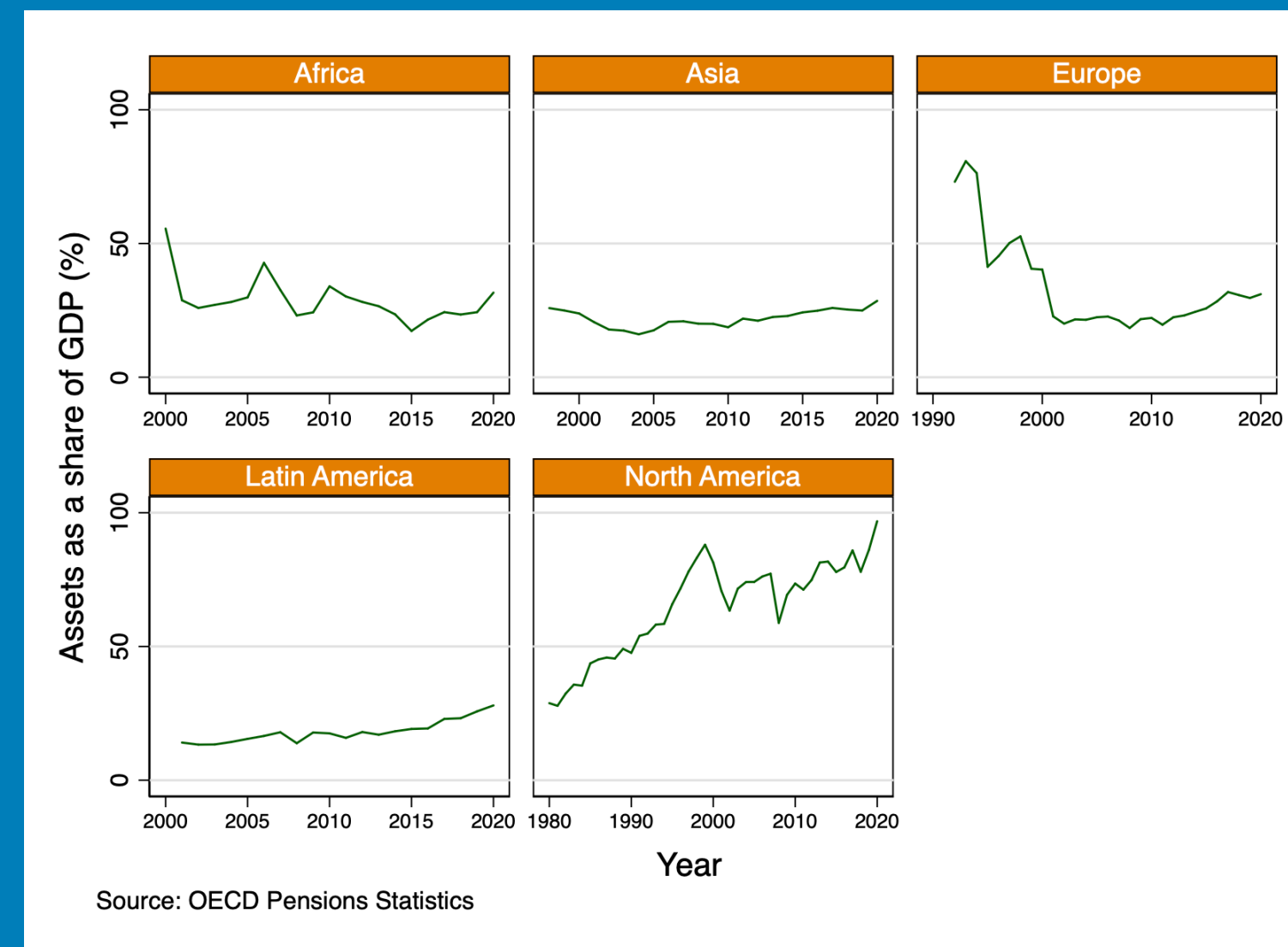
BACKGROUND

Financial security in old age is an important social determinant of health. Previous studies have observed impacts of pension plan expansion and generosity on indicators such as unmet medical need due to cost and old-age excess mortality. However, such research is limited to a small sample of countries and in some cases, represents decades-old data. This project seeks to identify consequences of historical and current pension policy reforms on health, using updated and more detailed measures of pension policy across a wider sample of countries.

DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The Society and Health Research Center at Universidad Mayor in Santiago, Chile has an overarching mission to advance well-being at the individual, social, and institutional levels. The center conducts research focused on social and life-course determinants of health, social relationships and cohesion, and institutions and regulation. Its research employs cross-national and comparative perspectives. In addition to research, the center is dedicated to training new researchers and disseminating evidence to broad audiences. This project is part of a larger research endeavor analyzing public policy and health.

GRAPHS

Source: OECD Pensions Statistics

Source: WHO Ageing Data

METHODS

A cross-national dataset was created by coding information using text as a primary source and extracting available quantitative data from relevant sources. The dataset was then validated for consistency and lack of missing data. Based on theoretical and empirical criteria, the best measurements were selected to begin STATA analysis. Ongoing analysis in STATA will involve creating summary measures, obtaining descriptive statistics, and running longitudinal regression models.

At top left, trends in pensions assets as a share of GDP across time are shown. At bottom left, trends in all-cause mortality in adults ages 60 and older are shown.

DISCUSSION

Data analysis for this project is ongoing. Further testing is needed to establish trends and relationships between pension policy and health changes.

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