Evaluation of Health Policy

Module Code: ECO00074M Credits: 10 Term: 2

Contact Hours: Five two-hour lectures followed by four two-hour practicals (18 contact hours).

Module Organiser: Professor Andrew Jones

Overview:

The narrow goal of evaluative research is to identify the causal impact of an intervention on outcomes of interest. The broader goal is to understand the mechanisms underlying this impact. In evaluating the cost-effectiveness of medical technologies, randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are often regarded to be the gold standard in identifying internally valid estimates of causal effects. In health policy research, randomized experiments are less prevalent and researchers are more often faced with identifying causal relationships from observational, or non-experimental, sources of data where the assignment of individuals to treatment or control group is beyond the control of the researcher. In such circumstances, the identification of causal effects is often difficult and econometric tools are often called into play.

Aims and Objectives:

The module is motivated by the use of non-experimental data to evaluate health policies. The emphasis of the module is on the issues that arise in health economics in finding appropriate data and reliable identification strategies, rather than on the underlying economic and econometric theory. The aim is to provide knowledge of the range of quantitative methods that are available for policy evaluation; an understanding of their underlying assumptions, strengths and weaknesses; an ability to apply the methods in practice. Throughout the module computer-based practical examples will be used to give experience of how these evaluation methods can be applied using the statistical software Stata.

Assessment:

Students will work in small groups on a case study and present their results in Week 9. Final assessment requires students to submit a solution to the case study in the form of a short (3,500 words, excluding tables, figures and appendices) research report by the end of the Spring Term.

Pre-requisites:

None.
Main References:

The main source of material is:


Additional reading will be provided with the lecture handouts.