



Dear Reader,

Among other topics the newsletter informs you about several publications that might interest you.

Sincerely yours,

Annette Hexelschneider

Head of Knowledge and Information Management Support Unit

Policy Briefs

Issue March (2) 2008: Happiness Across the Life Cycle: Exploring Age-Specific Preferences by Orsolya Lelkes

Existing evidence suggests a U-shaped relationship between age and happiness, when controlling for income and other personal characteristics. On the other hand, there is no clear pattern without the use of controls. Thus, it is not ageing as such, which results in declining happiness, but rather the circumstances associated with ageing. Which of these circumstances could be averted? Are the preferences of the elderly similar to others? The paper aims to explore these issues, using the European Social Survey.

The results imply that the varying level of life satisfaction during the life cycle may be explained partly by changing preferences (by the decreasing importance of work, the increasing importance of religion, and the declining disutility of being single), and partly by changing circumstances. While changing preferences seem to increase well-being, changing circumstances seem to decrease it. Old days thus are happy above all due to changing priorities in life.

Read more about: [Policy Brief](#)

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#)



Projects

Accurate Income Measurement for the Assessment of Public Policies, updated project paper

The updated project paper on “The Distributional Impact of ‘Imputed Rent’ in Italy” by Conchita D’Ambrosio and Chiara Gigliarano is on-line.

Read more about: [paper](#), [project](#)

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#)

Involvements

Section “Sociology of Childhood” of the German Sociological Association

Renate Kränzl-Nagl has become a member of the Scientific Committee of the Section “Sociology of Childhood” of the German Sociological Association for the period 2008-2009. Her main tasks are to assist the board in the preparation of conferences and to promote the Section’s activities internationally.

Read more about: [Section “Sociology of Childhood”](#) (in German)

For further information please contact: [Renate Kränzl-Nagl](#)

Events

Upcoming Events

4 April 2008, Vienna: “Web 2.0 und Semantic Web Reihe” (Web 2.0 and Semantic Web Series)

Annette Hexelschneider was invited to give a presentation “Web 2.0 und die Textfolgen” (Web 2.0 and the Content Results) about chances and risks of Web 2.0 for the knowledge worker of today and how content challenges can be mastered at the “Österreichisches Kompetenznetz für Semantische Systeme, Semantic Web und Web 2.0” (Austrian Expertise Network on Semantic Systems, Semantic Web and Web 2.0).

Read more about: [event](#)

For further information please contact: [Annette Hexelschneider](#)



Past Events

17 March 2008, London: Lecture on Poverty of Older People

Asghar Zaidi gave a lecture on “Poverty of Older People and its Links with Pension Policies” at the Institute of Gerontology at King’s College London, University of London.

For further information please contact: [Asghar Zaidi](#)

10-11 March 2008, Vienna: Workshop “Bridging Sustainability and Quality of Life”

Orsolya Lelkes was invited to participate and to give a presentation on Amartya Sen’s capabilities theory and its relationship to quality of life at a workshop on “Bridging Sustainability and Quality of Life” organized by SERI (Sustainable Europe Research Institute, Vienna) and UFZ (Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, Leipzig).

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#)

4 March 2008, Salzburg: 7th Austrian Poverty Conference

Michael Fuchs participated in the 7th Austrian Poverty Conference and gave a lecture on redistributive effects of social transfers within the workshop “Nur für die, die es wirklich brauchen. Sozialleistungen für alle oder nur für Bedürftige?” (Social Transfers for All or Only for Those in Need?).

Read more about: [the conference](#) (in German)

For further information please contact: [Michael Fuchs](#)

14 February 2008, New York: Lecture on Sustainable Welfare

Bernd Marin gave a lecture on “Living Longer, Working Shorter? Toward the Limits of Sustainable Welfare” at The European Union Studies Centre, The Graduate Center, CUNY and the European Union Center of New York.

For further information please contact: [Bernd Marin](#)



Publications

Peer Reviewed Journals

Abegunde, D. / Stanciole, A. (2008) 'The Economic Impact of Chronic Diseases: How Do Households Respond to Shocks? Evidence from Russia', *Social Science & Medicine*, Article in Press.

The epidemiological burden of chronic diseases is increasing worldwide and there is very little empirical evidence regarding the economic impact of chronic diseases on individuals and households. The primary objective of this paper is to explore the evidence on how chronic diseases affect household healthcare expenditure, non-health consumption, labour (earned) income, and to demonstrate how transfers may provide some insurance against shocks from chronic diseases. We have explicated a two-part Heckit model on household level data obtained from the Living Standard Measurement Surveys (LSMS) from Russia to control for nontrivial proportion of zeros in the dependent variables, skewed distribution of expenditure data and endogeneity. The results indicate that chronic diseases are significantly associated with higher levels of household healthcare expenditure in Russia and productivity losses reflected by reduced labour supply and reduced household labour income. Non-healthcare expenditure also increased. Results suggest that households are able to insure non-health consumption against chronic diseases, possibly from transfers, which also increased. In addition, socioeconomic status indicators significantly explained the impact of chronic diseases on households. Insurance and higher average education in households were associated with higher healthcare expenditure. Household transfers were significant in Russia despite an appreciable level of insurance cover. We conclude that households depend on informal coping mechanisms in the face of chronic diseases, irrespective of insurance cover. These results have implications for policies regarding the financing of treatment and control of chronic diseases in the country studied.

Read more about: [article](#)

Working Paper

Siciliani, L. / Stanciole, A. / Jacobs, R. (2008) "Do Waiting Times Reduce Hospital Costs?". *The University of York, Department of Economics Discussion Papers Series 08/02.*

Using a sample of 137 hospitals over the period 1998-2002 in the English National Health Service, we estimate the elasticity of hospital costs with respect to waiting times. Our cross-sectional and panel-data results suggest that at the sample mean (103 days), waiting times have no significant effect on hospital costs or, at most, a positive one. If significant, the elasticity of cost with respect to waiting time from our cross-sectional estimates is in the range 0.4-1. The elasticity is still positive but lower in our fixed-effects specifications (0.2-0.4). In all specifications, the effect of waiting time on costs is non-linear, suggesting a



U-shaped relationship between hospital costs and waiting times: the level of waiting time which minimises total costs is always below ten days.

Read more about: [discussion paper](#)

For further information please contact: [Anderson Stanciole](#)

Newspaper Articles

[Marin, Bernd \(2005-2008\) Various articles in Der Standard, Vienna, 2008](#)

For further information please contact: [Bernd Marin](#)

Contact for general newsletter/web site comments, suggestions or questions:

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