

Vaccination and Health Behaviour: Evidence from a Flu Vaccination Program in France

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Abstract

In this paper, we investigate the causal effects of the French flu vaccination program on the vaccination adherence. The influenza vaccine is free of charge for individuals aged 65 and over. We compare similar individuals facing different reimbursement schemes and find that eligibility to free vaccination has a positive effect on the probability of being vaccinated at the age threshold, i.e. at 65. We also shed light on heterogeneous effects depending on risk aversion levels and health behaviour. We find that people with healthy behaviour respond more than the others to the vaccination policy. We show that the effect on the vaccination adherence is driven by risk-averse individuals, while the free vaccination has no effect on risk-takers. This is a public policy issue as the decision-makers aim at identifying those who do not react to vaccination programs. Increasing vaccination adherence would enable both to protect the individuals themselves and to reduce the virus propagation.