



Curtin University



Faculty of Business and Law

2020 Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships

Strategic Project Profile

PROJECT TITLE: An Empirical Analysis of Wellbeing, Health Outcomes, Health Behaviours

FIELD OF RESEARCH CODE: 1502

PROJECT SYNOPSIS: This study aims to uncover key links between health outcomes, behaviours and individuals' self-reported wellbeing in order to understand how to allocate health care resources optimally. In order to address the research questions we anticipate the use of multiple applied economic methodologies including econometric analysis of administrative data sets, individual choice surveys, and economic experiments.

Using large-scale Australian and international datasets, this Project will focus on the interaction of individuals' wellbeing (or "happiness"), their health outcomes and their health behaviours. Health outcomes will include a range of measurable attributes, such as: self-reported health levels and clinically diagnosed medical conditions; obesity rates and body mass index (BMI) levels; and measures of mental health. A wide range health behaviours will be considered, including such risky behaviours as legal and illegal drug consumption (tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines, for example); as well as more positively orientated outcomes such as healthy eating regimes, exercise levels and sleep amounts. A significant amount of the project will be devoted to accounting for

individuals' particular reporting styles and biases, especially when dealing with such sensitive areas such as self-reported drug consumption levels.

A key aspect of the project will be to determine how health shocks are translated into changes in health behaviours via the translation mechanism of increased expected wellbeing levels due to these adaptations in behaviour. What are the magnitudes of changes in expected wellbeing required to effectively trigger similar changes in health behaviours?

There will be scope for the successful candidate to focus on particular areas of interest, with the overarching aims relating to how policy can be best used to most efficiently allocate scarce healthcare resources and to be most effective in promoting better health outcomes, especially for disadvantaged groups.

As the research will involve the econometric analysis of complex large-scale datasets, the candidate should ideally have experience in handling such (for example, the Household and Income Labour Dynamics of Australia survey). In addition, they should also have a strong background in econometrics and applied economics in general; and to be familiar with the use of econometric/statistical software, such as Stata, Limdep/Nlogit, Eviews, SAS, R and SPSS, for example. Some familiarity with discrete choice experiments or revealed preference experiments would be an asset. Experience in health economics would be an advantage, but not a necessity

FEASIBILITY AND RESOURCING – DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPPORT THIS PROJECT WILL RECEIVE:

The Faculty will provide a laptop, work space and research training. The University will provide research support funds. It is not anticipated that any additional resources will be required for the successful completion of the project

WHAT MINIMAL ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS EXPECTED BY THE CANDIDATE BE COMPETITIVE:

Honours I or higher. Some research experience with a first author output.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT/ PROGRAM FOR THE ENROLLING SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION:

Applied Economics is a priority area for the Faculty and the School. In particular, Health Economics is also a priority area for both School and Faculty, as evidenced by the Faculty's past/current specific support to this via the Health Economics Cluster. The project will also grow the Curtin-Aberdeen partnership. There is the potential for the project to involve industry engagement and therefore support the growth of demand-driven research in the Faculty and School.

Students are advised to contact the Project Lead listed below prior to submission of their scholarship application to discuss their suitability to be involved in this strategic project.

PROJECT LEAD CONTACT

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