

CONSEQUENCES OF MEDICARE PART D PLAN SWITCHING

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Statement of the Problem: Medicare Part D beneficiaries' tendency to stay with their initially chosen plan has been reported in many studies. Previous studies have focused on identifying factors associated with plan switching and little attention has been given to consequences of plan switching. This study aims to explore whether beneficiaries' switching decisions are aligned with their preferences and how much beneficiaries benefit from plan switching.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: The Health Retirement Study 2009 Health and Well-Being Study (HWB) and 2007 Prescription Drug Study (PDS) were used. The analysis included subjects who responded to both 2007 and 2009 surveys, and who continued to enroll in Part D. Descriptive statistics were obtained focusing on the differences in premium, out-of-pocket (OOP) costs. T-test and chi-square test were used to examine statistical significance of the difference.

Findings: Of 5,333 2009 survey respondents, 599 Part D enrollees were included in the analysis. Only a few beneficiaries (7.9%) switched plan for 2009, even though half of them answered to 2007 survey they considered switching. Regardless of whether to switch, majority of beneficiaries (75%) paid higher premium in 2009 compared to 2007. However, a larger percentage of switchers (50%) than non-switchers (44%) paid lower OOP in 2009 compared to 2007. Eleven % of switchers answered that their plans did not pay for some drugs as opposed to 29% of non-switchers. The percentage of switchers who did not take medication properly because of the cost slightly went down (from 23.4% to 21.28%) while that of non-switchers slightly increased (from 20.55% to 22.36%).

Conclusion & Significance: It appears that there is little benefit of plan switching in premium but some benefit in OOP costs. Lower cost-related non-adherence and OOP costs among the switchers suggest that plan switching improves the beneficiaries' medication taking behavior and spending in medications.

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LONG-TERM EFFECT OF UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND INVESTMENT IN POLICING ON VIOLENT CRIME INCIDENCE IN TAIWAN

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Taiwan had been assessed as one of the safest region in the world; however, violent crimes in society still disturb feeling of safety and quality of life among citizens. To investigate the effects of unemployment rate and investment in policing on the incidence of violent crime with dataset of 20 counties in Taiwan from 1998 to 2014. Dataset of 20 counties in Taiwan from 1998 to 2014 were registered from Taiwan's Statistical Information Network. Unemployment rate was defined by the percentage of the total labor force that is unemployed but actively seeking employment and willing to work and measured investment in policing by the budget in policing per capita. Violent crime rate (VCR) was defined by the cases of violent crime per 100,000 population. Generalized estimating equation (GEE) and R statistical software, version 3.3.0 were used to analyze on data of repeated measurements. Average 83% of VCR significantly declined from 1998 to 2014 in Taiwan's, but the unemployment rate and the national investment on police administration incrementally fluctuated. Using GEE analysis, VCR positively correlated with the unemployment rate, which increased violent crime rate with 3.03 events/100,000 significantly per increase by unemployment rate. Moreover, the investment on policing negatively correlated with VCR, which increased one unit of investment on policing with significantly reduced 1.81 events/100,000 of VCR. Synergistic effects of region were found with unemployment rate and investment in policing on VCR. VCR in urban area are significantly higher than those in rural areas. Similarly, on average increase per budget investment in policing with reduction of VCR in urban area are significantly higher than those of in rural areas. It is needed to setup the early warning system to proactive the unemployment rate and adjust the budget investment in policing to effectively reduce VCR, especially focusing on urban area.

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