

ALONSO MAGDALENO, María Isabel

Dynamic Analysis of the Process of Establishing the Number of Places for Specialist Medical Training in Spain

Abstract: The number of physicians has been a highly controversial issue in Spain. Currently there is a substantial imbalance in the supply and demand of specialists. The present analysis of the problem entailed, first of all, a review of the literature on the subject and a study of the existing legislation. A simulation model was then formulated using systems dynamics methodology. A projection of the number of specialists for the years to come, by speciality, was computed to study the short- medium- and long-term effects of present policies in connection with the number of trainee places envisaged. Finally, the origins and underlying causes of the problem were identified and alternative policies and measures proposed to contribute to correcting this imbalance in the future.

Key words: health economics, health policy, medicals, public health, systems analysis, simulation model, Spain.

JEL Classification: C53, H51, I18.

CAIRÓ I CÉSPEDES, Gemma and COLOM JAÉN, Artur

Debt Relief in Africa: Towards the Reduction of Poverty?

Abstract: This article studies the opportunities to reduce poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa in the wake of a G-7, World Bank and International Monetary Fund proposal to condone the region's debt, the so-called HIPC initiative, geared to relieving the burden of debt in heavily indebted poor countries. A historic review of the process of African indebtedness, identifying the causes and analysing debt structure, is followed by an analysis of the terms of the initiative and the state of implementation as at June 2001. Finally, certain elements of the initiative are criticised from the perspective of human development.

Key words: economic and social development, external debt, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Africa.

JEL Classification: F34, O55.

COSTA I FONT, Joan

Establishment of Priorities, Collective Participation and Public Decision-making in Health Care

Abstract: Limited public resources and the political process aimed at achieving «social efficiency» are behind the need to establish priorities between health care programmes in

which account is taken of collective preferences. This article reviews the limitations to the most widely extended collective decision-making methods in health care and describes the experimental application of a method known as the willingness to assign approach (DAA), designed to steer decisions on the establishment of health care programme priorities. The survey makes essentially three contributions: firstly, the results indicate that the method proposed seems to reflect the public decision-making context separately; secondly, preference aggregation shows reasonable levels of consistency at the individual and collective levels; and finally, the programme evaluations reveal that the population values other benefit dimensions, in addition to health gains.

Key words: health economics, resource allocation, collective consciousness.

JEL Classification: D63, D72, I19.

LÁZARO ALQUÉZAR, Angelina

Discounting Non-monetary Consequences in the Economic Evaluation of Health Care Programmes

Abstract: The discount rate used to compute temporal cost and benefit flows is central to the economic evaluation of health care programmes and compromises the efficient allocation of public resources. In the most common approach, cost-efficiency analysis, the results of programmes are quantified in terms of lives, life expectancy or life expectancy adjusted for quality. The way to standardise these flows of non-monetary consequences is a question for which there is no satisfactory reply. This paper proposes the empirical and indirect determination of the relationship between the discount rates for monetary and health consequences on the grounds of the relationship between the individual time preference for health and money in the contexts of private and social choice.

Key words: health economics, health policy, programs evaluation, resource allocation, discount.

JEL Classification: H51, I19.

MUNS, Joaquín

The Imbalances in the US Economy and Their Impact on the World Growth Model

Abstract: The sharp decline in global economic activity in 2000-2002 punctured the new economy paradigm myth and revived interest in the world growth model. The central role of the United States in this model has been thrown into relief. In the nineties - and

particularly in the second half of that decade - the US economy underwent rapid growth, although subject to two substantial macroeconomic imbalances that have intensified with time. The most important is the gap between savings and gross investment which has translated in turn into a large current account deficit, financed with foreign savings. The United States has turned the savings received from the rest of the world into an important driver of global growth. The article concludes by pointing out that this model of global growth is unsatisfactory and has adverse medium- and long-term consequences for both the world economy and the United States itself. In particular, the paper reviews the possible ultimate consequences of the model and the likelihood of an abrupt and traumatic outcome.

Key words: financial markets, economic growth, current account balance, Unites States,

JEL Classification: FO2, F32, G15, O51.

OLIVA MORENO, Juan, DEL LLANO SEÑARÍS, Juan E. and SACRISTÁN DEL CASTILLO, José A.

The Economic Evaluation of Health Care Technologies in Spain. Present Situation and Utility as a Guide in Allocating Health Care Resources.

Abstract: Efficiency has become one of the primary concerns of health care authorities, who increasingly apply criteria of economic rationality in their decisions. This article studies the role of analyses to evaluate health care technologies. These analyses are defined and the different types of evaluation briefly described, with a review of their characteristic features. Spanish studies conducted in this area are reviewed and their development, utility and limitations discussed. Finally, the possible impact of these analyses on the decision-making process in health care resource allocation in Spain is considered and conclusions are drawn on the present situation and how it may be expected to evolve.

Key words: health economics, cost-benefit analysis, health policy, bibliographical reviews, Spain.

JEL Classification: D61, I12.

OTERO GARCÍA-CASTRILLÓN, Carmen

Access to Drugs: Patents and the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

Abstract: The access to medical products in developing countries has inspired considerable debate on the relationship between the price of these products and the patent

protection imposed by the TRIPS Agreement. This paper discusses the legal aspects of the actual scope of the conditioning factors that the TRIPS Agreement imposes on WTO members in connection with patents in general and such protection related to public health in particular. The theoretical and doctrinal thrust of the study is supplemented by a practical approach to certain significant examples, such as South Africa and Brazil, as well as to the situation presently prevailing in the pharmaceutical industry and, finally, to differential pricing as a compromise solution.

Key words: international trade, pharmaceuticals, copyright, patents, developing countries, WTO.

JEL Classification: I19, K33, L65, O19.

PINILLA DOMÍNGUEZ, Jaime

Limited Rational Addiction in Consolidating the Habit of Smoking: An Empirical Approach

Abstract: The present paper proposes an innovative empirical approach to the effect that the price of cigarettes has on the consolidation of smoking as a habit. Two alternative estimation methods were implemented. The first consisted of an analysis of the market behaviour of young adults in connection with the choice of the price of the brand of cigarettes smoked, in which the demand for cigarettes was found to be subject to price elasticity, here termed «observed elasticity». In the second approach a change was proposed in stated preferences by applying the contingent valuation method. Young adults with greater smoking experience (higher consumption, higher level of addiction and several unsuccessful attempts at quitting) were better able to adjust their stated elasticity to observed elasticity, a finding that supports economic models where the emphasis is on the lack of total rationality.

Key words: health economics, information, uncertainty, tobacco.

JEL Classification: D12, D83, I10.

PINILLOS GARCÍA, Mariola and ANTOÑANZAS VILLAR, Fernando

Considering Quality in Efficiency Analyses. An Application in Primary Health Care

Abstract: This article describes an efficiency analysis conducted on the provision of health care in which the quality of the product offered by health care centres, included as one of the product dimensions, was objectively evaluated by means of an indicator

specifically designed for this purpose. The joint analysis of the aims of efficiency and quality, which may on occasion appear to be contradictory but which in fact govern everyday activity in Spanish health care centres, was employed in pursuit of a broader and more realistic valuation of the productive performance of such centres.

Key words: health economics, primary health care, public health, health centres, economic efficiency, total quality.

JEL Classification: C61, D61, I10, L15.

PORTILLO PÉREZ DE VIÑASPRE, Fabiola and ANTOÑANZAS VILLAR, Fernando

Analysis of the Information Existing in Spain on the Hazards Associated with Smoking: Application of the Bayes Model

Abstract: The intention of this empirical study was to analyse the perception of the hazards associated with smoking, based on figures from a nation-wide survey conducted in Spain on a sample of 2,571 respondents. The main objectives were, on the one hand, to determine the possible existence of market failures in connection with imperfect information and, on the other, to ascertain whether consumers incorporate information in accordance with the Bayes – or rational - learning process by analysing the variables involved in the perception of such hazards. The results obtained were highly consistent with the above process and showed that young people perceive greater hazards than other age groups, which is an indication of the effectiveness of the information policies to discourage smoking implemented in recent decades.

Key words: health economics, consumer information, tobacco, Bayesian analysis.

JEL Classification: D12, D83, I10.

RIVERA CASTIÑEIRA, Berta

The Role of Health in the Accumulation of Human Capital: Effects on Productivity in Developed Economies

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to analyse the relationship between state of health and product variation through improvements in the levels of human capital and a reduction in its depreciation rate. Different estimates are performed to verify to what extent total, current and capital spending in health care are relevant variables in explaining variations in productivity. The analysis focuses on economies with high levels of welfare and income per head, drawing for this purpose on a sampling of OECD countries.

Key words: health economics, economic growth, human capital, productivity, health expenditures.

JEL Classification: I10, J24, O40.

RODRÍGUEZ ÁLVAREZ, Ana

Efficiency of Public Hospitals in Spain: Performance Models and Empirical Evidence

Abstract: The present article reviews the main theoretical and methodological proposals used to study hospital, and more specifically Spanish public hospital, performance. The basic characteristics of the sector, namely a bureaucratic structure characterised by complex organisation and control, are discussed in an introductory chapter. The main conclusion drawn is that the productive inefficiencies predicted by economic theory for the sector are supported by empirical evidence.

Key words: health economics, hospital management, economic efficiency.

JEL Classification: H51, I10, L30, R30.

RODRÍGUEZ MÍGUEZ, Eva and PINTO PRADES, José Luis

Social Valuation of Health Care Treatments: The Importance of Age and Distributive Effects

Abstract: This paper analyses the social importance of patient age and the distribution of health gains in resource allocation. After a brief bibliographic review, the authors present the results of an experiment designed to obtain a preliminary estimate of social preferences for these two concepts. From the results obtained it may be deduced that the participants in the survey found them both to be relevant. With regard to age, the treatments intended for younger patients were afforded higher priority, although no significant differences were observed in the consideration given 20- as compared to 40-year-olds or between the ages of 60 and 80. As far as distributive preferences are concerned, the respondents held a positive view of the distribution of gains over a larger number of people, provided individual gains were not unduly small. The results also suggest the need to reconsider the assumptions underlying cost-efficiency analysis, so as to include social preferences in the establishment of health care priorities.

Key words: health economics, health policy, health care, resource allocation, bibliographical reviews.

JEL Classification: D63, I10.

SÁNCHEZ MARTÍNEZ, Fernando Ignacio

European Integration and Regulation of the Drug Market. The European Agency for the Evaluation of Medical Products (EMA)

Abstract: One of the areas in which the market for pharmaceuticals is subject to governmental regulation is the procedures for introducing new medical products on the market. It is in this area where the greatest strides have been made in European Union harmonisation and integration, in particular since the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medical Products (EMA) was created and became operational. The intention of this article is to draw up a balance of the EMA in its seven years of existence, highlighting its accomplishments and discussing the issues outstanding and the prospects for the future of the system for authorising medical products in Europe.

Key words: pharmaceutical industry, pharmaceuticals, European integration.

JEL Classification: I18, L51.

TAMAYO LORENZO, Pedro A.

Decentralised Health Care and Resource Allocation in Spain: An Analysis from the Perspective of Equity

Abstract: This paper analyses the manner in which the autonomous regions of Spain have been allocating the financial resources provided by the INSALUD and earmarked for health care, in terms of how closely such allocations meet the criterion of equity. Starting from the evidence of the contradiction between the notion of equity and the course of events in our country until very recently, the article reviews the methods used in the regional distribution of funds in other countries to establish a comparative analysis. Finally, it contains a brief discussion of a survey conducted to determine the variables that could be incorporated into the system to bring allocations into line with the criterion of justice laid down in Spanish health care legislation.

Key words: health economics, hospital management, administrative decentralization, resource allocation, health services, Spain, INSALUD.

JEL Classification: D63, I18.

VERA HERNÁNDEZ, Marcos

Microeconometrics and Asymmetric Information: Application to Health Care Utilisation

Abstract: This article focuses on the contrast between the assumptions of contract theory in the framework of health care utilisation. In this regard, it discusses the characteristics of the contracts that will be observed to be in equilibrium from the standpoints of moral hazard and adverse selection. These assumptions are then contrasted using structural and reduced-form models. Finally, a summary description is provided of three applications, one with data for Catalonia and the other two with figures relating to the United States of America.

Key words: health economics, health care, insurance contracts, risks, health insurances, Spain, United States.

JEL Classification: D81, I10.