

Report on Master Thesis

Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague

Student:	Lucie Blechová
Advisor:	Mgr. Michal Paulus
Title of the thesis:	Czech Allergology and Clinical Immunology: Utilization and Provision in Space

OVERALL ASSESSMENT (provided in English, Czech, or Slovak):

The thesis analyzes utilization and provision of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (further ACI) in the Czech Republic in the geographical (district) context. It takes advantage of special econometrics acknowledging that neighboring geographical areas may influence utilization/provision of care in a particular district. First an appropriate OLS model was determined, then spatial autocorrelation was tested for, and finally spatial autoregressive model correctly used. Not controlling for spatial autocorrelation would have otherwise resulted in bias in the results.

The thesis suggests a number of interesting and policy-relevant findings. A detailed analysis in chapter 3 already reveals that ACI physicians are very unequally distributed among districts. The largest concentration of ACI physicians is in big cities, which is quite predictable, but there are districts where there is not even a single ACI physician at all. Thus patients have to travel to obtain ACI care. When comparing fitted values obtained from the spatial autoregressive model and the observed values in chapter 6, inefficiencies in 80 % of districts resulting from unequal distribution of physicians were recognized. This should serve as a motivation for policy-makers to remedy this, so that the whole healthcare system saves resources. The significant spatial autoregressive element in the model suggests that steps in individual districts should be coordinated at the national level, the more so if the relationship is causal, which is however left for further research to be determined. Should the relationship be causal and the policy not coordinated, the effects of differing policies may partially cancel each other out.

Another interesting finding is that utilization and provision of ACI care are most probably determined by different factors. The model for provision of care did not reveal any spatial autocorrelation, or any of the variables significant, which were previously employed and found significant in the utilization model.

The thesis is an excellent piece of scholarly work. It is a pioneering work in the ACI sector in the Czech Republic. The contribution is enormous both from academic and policy perspectives. It is written in a very good English, it is well structured and interesting to read. The analysis is carried out very thoroughly and rigorously. The thesis is carefully edited (only a single typo was found in the whole work) and written with utmost care. However, some parts are too extensive or too descriptive and may be shortened (e.g. descriptive statistics of the datasets could be grouped into one table; a detailed description of tests provided in chapter 6 may be shortened because sometimes info from tables is unreasonable repeated in the text.).

Anyways, **I do not have any objections against how the analysis is carried out.** I hope the author gets a better dataset in the future to be able to analyze also provision of ACI care to complement the analysis of utilization of care in the thesis, to be able to provide an overall picture of the Czech ACI sector in the geographical context.

I suggest grade 1 (excellent). The thesis should be turned into a WP. If there is any possibility of academic award for the thesis, I suggest Lucie be the candidate.

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SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
Literature (max. 20 points)	20
Methods (max. 30 points)	29
Contribution (max. 30 points)	30
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	20
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	99
GRADE (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	1

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Jana Votápková

DATE OF EVALUATION: January 23, 2016



Referee Signature

EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:

LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0

METHODS: *The tools used are relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the author's level of studies. The thesis topic is comprehensively analyzed.*

Strong Average Weak
30 15 0

CONTRIBUTION: *The author presents original ideas on the topic demonstrating critical thinking and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and empirics. There is a distinct value added of the thesis.*

Strong Average Weak
30 15 0

MANUSCRIPT FORM: *The thesis is well structured. The student uses appropriate language and style, including academic format for graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables and disposes with a complete bibliography.*

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0

Overall grading:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE		
81 – 100	1	= excellent	= výborně
61 – 80	2	= good	= velmi dobře
41 – 60	3	= satisfactory	= dobře
0 – 40	4	= fail	= nedoporučuji k obhajobě