

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Bc. Eva Němečková
Advisor:	PhDr. Jana Votápková
Title of the thesis:	Medical Tourism within the Czech Republic

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The thesis is devoted to empirical analysis of medical tourism within the Czech Republic in terms of travelling for a hospitalization or a medical treatment into other region or district than that of the residence of a patient. The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 introduces to the topic. Chapter 2 presents basic facts about the Czech Republic and its health care system. Chapter 3 devotes to a phenomenon of the medical tourism and chapter 4 continues with a literature review regarding the issue. The main part of the thesis is situated in the chapter 5 which deals with the own empirical research of the author using data for the Czech Republic. Finally, chapter 6 concludes.

For the empirical analysis, the author uses data for the years 2009-2014 provided by the Czech general health insurance (VZP). After a preliminary analysis, which I found very nice and useful, she continues with a subsample of data and using a logit model estimates an influence of various aspects of a health care as well as patients' characteristics on whether the care was provided in a region/district of a patient's residence or whether the patient travelled into other district/region. I find this approach definitely legitimate overall quality of the thesis very high.

I have only few concerns regarding the thesis:

- The first comes from the geographical point of a view. Using regions and districts to define whether the patient travelled or not is in fact a huge simplification of a reality. Distribution of hospitals is relatively uneven among regional units and for a lot of patients the in fact nearest hospital is very often not that situated in their district/region. Moreover, the distance can be instead of kilometres expressed in time needed for such a travel, and so on. For example, from the Central Bohemia region, which is absolutely strange in its construction as it surrounds the Prague region, the better connection (by car or public traffic) is always to Prague than to other parts of the region itself. In general, the perception whether a patient is a medical tourist or not should be rather defined in terms of choosing a hospital which is further from the place of his residence than the nearest hospital. But it would be definitely very difficult to gather such an information. On the other hand, I would appreciate at least discussion of these issues in the text of the thesis.
- The author uses data from VZP. It would be nice to mention which proportion of Czech patients is registered there.
- In chapter 4 I would appreciate more information about the mentioned empirical papers (e.g. what does it mean long run and short run in (Lee, 2000) or whether Flanigan (2009) studied just linear effect of age on tourism).
- My main concern is however about the interpretation of influence of university hospitals on medical tourism. The author says there is only few of them in the Czech Republic. Thus, in case a university hospital is not in patient's region/district, if he travelled for a health care behind the borders of his region/district the probability that he was cured in a university hospital is much lower than that he was in a common hospital. Vice versa if he was in a university hospital he was more probably travelling outside from his own region/district, then if he was in a common hospital. Thus I believe that the higher detected effect of university hospitals on medical tourism could be given just by their relative scarcity, not by quality issues.

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- Also other interpretations of motives behind medical tourism were relatively vague. It would be quite worthy to support the pure empirical part with some survey among the patients or doctors (not need to be of a large scale) or find some citations in theoretical works about patients' behaviour (if they exist) to better illustrate the issue.
- Concerning the manuscript form of the thesis, I would prefer using English words "regions" and "districts" throughout the text instead of the Czech terms (after simply defining them at the beginning). The Czech expressions are rather disturbing during the reading.

Suggested question for the defence is:

- I would like to know why a subsample was used for the logit model and not all the data.

In case of successful defence, I recommend "**výborně**" (**excellent, 1**).

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED

CATEGORY	POINTS
Literature (max. 20 points)	15
Methods (max. 30 points)	25
Contribution (max. 30 points)	25
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	16
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	81
GRADE (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	1

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Mgr. Pavla Břízová

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Referee Signature