

Colloque sur les politiques actives du marché du travail
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“Job search assistance programs for the unemployed”: Discussion

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The importance of meetings

What happens at meetings?

- Counseling / job search assistance
- Monitoring

Strands of the economic literature on meetings*

- Ex ante effects of invitations
- Ex ante effects of sanctions for non show-ups
- Ex post effects of increased counseling
- Ex post effects of additional caseworkers
- Ex post effects of increased monitoring
- Interaction between caseworkers and clients
- General equilibrium effects of intensified counseling

*) Excellent literature overview in Pederson/Rosholm/Svarer (2012)

Contents of both talks in this session

Rosholm lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on <i>frequency of meetings</i>• Randomized experiments for Denmark• Frequent meetings increase employment rates; different results for men and women
Lechner lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on <i>caseworkers' strategies</i>• Statistical matching analysis for Switzerland, linking caseworker data and data on unemployed persons• Better results for caseworkers with strong employer network, who are less cooperative, and who have similar characteristics as their clients
Policy importance	High, as meetings seem to be cost-efficient, and allocating clients to “similar caseworkers” might improve the effectiveness of meetings

Some points for discussion

External validity	Can results be generalized across countries? (country-specific organization of the PES, cultural aspects)
Performance of performance standards	Role of the performance system of local labor market agencies?
“Black box”	Through which channels do meetings with a caseworker work? More intensive job search, lower reservation wages, concessions in other dimensions?
Effect heterogeneity	Why seem meetings to be less effective for long-term unemployed?

Results from a recent German study

New study for Germany

- Boockmann/Osiander/Stops/Verbeek (2013, mimeo)
- Similar approach as the Swiss studies
- Participation rate caseworkers in survey 40 percent

Effect of caseworkers' strategies and perceptions on exits into employment (E) & out of unemployment (O)

- Focus on quick re-integration **+ E / + O**
- Clients responsible for own unemployment **~ E / + O**
- Use of sanctions **~ E / + O**
- Co-operation with clients **~ E / ~ O**
- Importance of regulations for own actions **+ E / + O** (but only in the short run)
- Work perceived as self-determined **~ E / ~ O**

Conclusion

In line with Lechner's findings that caseworker strategies have an impact on the effectiveness of meetings – but channels might differ across countries