Discussion of Lalive’s and Arni’s work

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Issues re: Lalive’s presentation

• Main question
  – « Are Social Networks an Effective Job Search Channel? »
  – A cheap RCT information treatment, prolonging a meeting with caseworker by 15 minutes

• The issue is important! In DK, at present almost 70% of all jobs are filled via ‘informal channels’
Issues re: Lalive’s presentation

- Lalive finds no overall impact of the information treatment
  - Distinction between strong & weak ties?
  - Additional information
    - 26 (control) vs 32 (treatment) slides
    - Did the same case workers conduct meetings for controls ... and can we be certain they did not reveal information on importance of informal channels?
  - Response rate of 40% on some questionnaires
    - problem for ext validity?
Issues re: Lalive’s presentation

• Important finding:
  – information on importance of contacts helps women find jobs ...but is detrimental to job search of men!!

• Why?
  – Gender of case worker?
  – Behavioural differences btw men & women?
  – Different labour markets for men and women?

• To provide men and women with equal opportunities, we have to treat them differently!
Research questions:
• Can coaching help ‘older’ workers?
• Does profiling information affect case workers’ assessments and help the unemployed find employment?

Methodology: RCTs, register data AND repeated behavioral questionnaire
Issues re: Arni’s presentation

• Coaching helps older workers, e.g. by reducing their reservation wages
  – Gender differences in behavioral reactions?
• Important new feature is the study of dynamics of behavioral changes!
Issues re: Arni’s presentation

Profiling

• ...was also used in Denmark for a short period around 2003

  – Not well received by case worker and abandoned again after less than 1 year in operation
  – ‘we knew it already’ ...or ‘makes no sense’
  – ‘She has low job finding because she is female, uneducated and immigrant... but WHAT CAN WE DO?’
  – Targeting!?
Common issues

• Increasing reliance on randomized experiments - RCTs – for providing solid evidence on what works in social sciences
  – and in a few EU countries (e.g. France, Denmark, Sweden) and Switzerland

• ... is important:
  – Easily understandable methods and results
  – Internal validity (external)
  – Fosters an evidence based culture among policy makers – who do not understand matching estimators and duration models
Common issues

• Differential effects by gender:
  – why these large - apparently behavioural - differences?
  – Nature or nurture?
  – Behavioural differences in other dimensions?

• Repeated behavioral questionnaires in combination with register data and RCTs may shed light on these issues