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Mental Health and the Response to Financial Incentives: Evidence from a Survey Incentives Experiment

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Abstract

Although mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression are common, there is little research on whether individuals in poor mental health react differently from others to financial incentives. This paper exploits an experiment from the UK Understanding Society Innovation Panel to assess how the participation response to randomly-assigned financial incentives differs by mental health status. We find that individuals in good mental health are more likely to respond when offered a higher financial incentive, whereas those in poor mental health are indifferent to the increased incentive. We find no comparable differences for physical health.

Keywords: Mental Health; Financial Incentives; Survey Incentives Experiment

JEL classification: I10; C93

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