Adding Nudge-based Reminders to Financial Incentives for Promoting Antibody Testing and Vaccination to Mitigate the Spread of Rubella

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# Abstract

We study the effects of combining financial incentives with nudges to promote antibody testing and vaccination to prevent the spread of rubella. In FY2019, the Japanese government began providing vouchers for free antibody testing and vaccination to men aged 40--57 years. Vouchers were automatically mailed to 40--46-year-old men in FY2019. While those aged 47--57 received vouchers after FY2020, they could obtain vouchers for undertaking antibody testing and being vaccinated in FY2019 by applying. Focusing on this policy distinction, we conduct a late-FY2019 online field experiment with Japanese 40--57-year-old men. We randomly send nudge-based text message reminders recommending antibody testing and vaccination and track self-reported behavior until the end of FY2019. One nudge-based reminder with an altruistic message on fetal harm through infection from men to pregnant women significantly promotes antibody testing and vaccination among those who have already received vouchers as a financial incentive. By contrast, nudge-based reminders have no promoting effect for those who must apply for vouchers.

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