With continuously changing abilities and accumulating mutations, SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, have constant evolvements and accumulated mutations in its genetic code over time. The emergence and quick spread of the alpha, beta, and delta SARS-CoV-2 VOCs have generated continuous waves of infection in the past two years. The virus has brought tremendous shocks to the supply side of the economy and resulted in millions of deaths around the globe, representing an unprecedented tragic loss of the whole human society.

By analyzing the Covid-19 Case Surveillance Public Use Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, our project aims to identify the primary factors that are sensible to the effects of Covid-19. We mainly focus on samples in North Carolina and ignore the individual observations which have missing/unknown live status records. Focusing on a single state would help eliminate potential time-invariant effects among different states.

We hope this project will bring suggestive policy implications by identifying the most vulnerable groups against the Covid-19 virus among the population. Hopefully with our convincing results, the medical facilities would be able to allocate resources, such as hospitalization and medical aids, to the appropriate groups efficiently. Also, the government can assign social welfare benefits and designate priorities for vaccination by understanding which group is most vulnerable to the virus.

Q1: What are the primary factors you intend to test initially (what treatments)?

As mentioned in the introduction, we aim to identify the most vulnerable group against Covid-19 virus. Our primary factors include characteristic variables (age, sex, race), Geological variables (County), sociological variables (hospitalization).

Q2: Any specification on the primary variables?

Age\_Group: This is a categorical variable which has three values: 0-17 years; 18-49 years; 50-64 years; 65+years

Race: This is another categorical variable which has six values: American Indian/Alaska Native; Asian; Black; Multiple/Other; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; White

Sex: This is a variable which has three values: Male; Female; Other

Ethnicity: This is a variable which has two values: Hispanic/Non-Hispanic

Hospitalization: Was this patient hospitalized? Yes/No/Unknown

Death\_yn: Did the patient die as a result of this illness? Yes/No

Underlying\_conditions\_yn: Did the patient have one or more of the underlying medical conditions and risk behaviours: diabetes mellitus, hypertension, severe obesity (BMI>40), cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease, other chronic diseases, immunosuppressive condition, autommune condition, current smoker, former smoker, substance abuse or misuse, disability, psychological/psychiatric, pregnancy, other.

Q3: Policy implications based on your results?

Q4: Why choose this model? What are the (dis-)advantages?

We use the Double-robust estimator model.

Casual relationship

Q5: How do you compare the results from different models? Which are the key coefficients/parameters you look at?

Q6: Why choose North Carolina? Why not choose the United States?

We choose North Carolina to eliminate potential bias existing in the large volume of data. When including every state in the country, the data contains 1.8 billion observations during our time interval. To reduce the time-invariant effect lying in each state, such as the geography, population structure differences and government efficiencies, which our data has no measures of, we restrict our observations to a single state: North Carolina.

Q7: Why 2020?

We focus on the year 2020 to eliminate the potential effects of vaccination. According to the reports from CDC, North Carolina's COVID-19 Vaccine eligibility opens for all adults on April 7. Since our data source does not contain information regarding the individual's vaccination status, we only focus on the year 2020.

Q8: Any limitations?

The first limitation is that although we have a large number of observations with solid values, there are still observations with missing values up to twenty thousand that we have to delete. As a result, there might exist a loss of “explanality” inside the observation with missing values of death rates.

Besides, our data has no access to the severity of symptoms the patient experiences. Thus, when testing the casual relationship between hospitazation and death rates, we can not exclude the possibility that patients with severer symptoms would go to hopstials and patients with less severe symptoms would stay home, leading to the case that death rates of former would be higher than that of later.

Q9: Any past literature? What are the differences between this project and them?

In the past two years, several papers have discussed the potential determinants of Covid-19 death rates. Lan Feinhandler and four other authors offer several predictors that lead to the death rate during the first eight months of 2020. They implement the OLS model/Two-stage regression model/Lasso regression model and conclude that the national Covid-19 death rate is greater than that of other flu pandemics. Also, the increase in the reported death rate in states with Democratic governors is higher than the increase in states with Republican governors. (Feinhandler et al., 2020). Besides, in the paper *Determinants of COVID-19 Death Rate in Europe: Empirical Analysis*, six authors use the OLS models to test multiple hypotheses. They finally prove that the population density in European countries does not affect the COVID-19 death rate. Also, the COVID-19 death rate will not drastically raise mortality statistics since people already at risk are susceptible to the disease. (Kozlovskyi et al., 2021)

The difference between past literature and our project is that first, we focus on a single state, and our data source covers the whole 2020 year. Besides, as mentioned above, our project uses the Double-robust estimator model.

Q10: What is your datasource?

As mentioned in the introduction part, our project uses data from CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This case surveillance public use dataset has 19 elements for all COVID-19 cases shared with CDC. It includes demographics, geography (county and state of residence), any exposure history, disease severity indicators and outcomes, and the presence of any underlying medical conditions and risk behaviours. As for a specification of the variables, one can check the answer of Q2.

We choose this datasource because compared to other data sources, it includes all cases with the earliest date available in each record (date received by CDC or date related to illness/specimen collection) at least 14 days before constructing the previously updated datasets. This 14-day lag allows case reporting to be stabilized and ensure that time-dependent outcome data are accurately captured (CDC, 2022).

Q11: What is your result?

Q12: Does your result match the past literature or totally different?

Q13: Any future directions/Perspective?

With access to data regarding the severity of the illness, we can futher test the selection bias mentioned above and future test the effectiveness of hospitalization and therapy received inside.

Also, if we can acquire data related to the severity of other illnesses which share similar medical-source-occupation patterns with Covid-19, we are able to determine whether the virus is as severe as we expect.

Q14:

Reference

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