When scale and replication work: Learning from summer youth employment experiments - Discussion

Paper by Sara B. Heller

Daniel Pollak

Tel-Aviv University

Jun 2023

Overview

- **Main questions:**
  - What is the effect of summer youth employment programs on socialy bad behavior?
  - What are the heterogeneous effects of these programs?
- **Data:**
  - RCT of OSC+ in Chicago, and WorkReady in Philadelphia
  - WorkReady served a less targeted, less criminally active population than OSC+
  - Administrative data on youth contact with various government agencies, arrests records, and so on..

Empirical Strategy Reiteration

$$Y_{ist} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T_{is} + B_2 X_{ist-1} + \gamma_s + \epsilon_{ist}$$

- i - individual, s - strata (program) location, t - period
- Y_{ist} captures the outcome of interest for the individual, T_{is} is an indicator for individual i being randomly assigned to be offered a program, X_{ist-1} is a set of individual i's pre-randomization characteristics
- Identifies ITT - the effect of receiving the option to participate in a program
- Using T_{is} as instrument for paticipation identifies LATE - the effect for the compliers

Assumptions

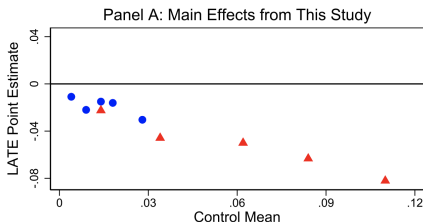All assumptions hold trivially due to the random assignment

Results

	ITT	Control-mean	LATE
	WorkReady		
Total Number of Arrests	-.010**	0.028	-0.030**
	(0.003)		(0.0009)
Number of Other Arrests	-.004**	0.004	-0.011**
	(0.001)		(0.004)
	OCS+		
Total Number of Arrests	-0.023	0.176	-0.087
	(0.015)		(0.057)
Number of Other Arrests	-0.017*	0.084	-0.063*
	(0.009)		(0.035)

The higher the control-means, the stronger the effect?

Discussion

- The paper estimates effect heterogeneity by counterfactual outcome level
- Varitation in Y_{i0} represents the risk of the individual
  - Higher is riskier
- Y_0 is not observed for the treatment group
- Comparing LATE from multiple experiments as function of control means

Panel A: Main Effects from This Study

Discussion

- We might extrapolate the absolute magnitude of SYEPs' effects in new settings as a proportional function of the anticipated control mean

- But there could be other explanations -
    - Focusing specific level of risk in the participants (OSC+ targets more violent people)
    - Low risk individuals may have benefitted from other programs or support

- Anything correlated with higher Y_0s, including program design and implementation details that differ for higher-risk groups, could be driving the relationship