

# Health Economics and Policy

## Annual Report 2024



# Health Economics and Policy (HEP) Division

## 2024 Annual Activity Report

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# 1 HIGHLIGHTS

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- The HEP team, in partnership with the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) and with the support of Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, successfully organized the **2024 European Health Economics Association (EUHEA) conference**. The conference theme "Opening up perspectives on health economics" attracted a record number of participants. Nearly 200 high quality parallel sessions covered a wide range of topics in the field. In addition to keynote addresses by Carol Propper of Imperial College London and Owen O'Donnell of Erasmus University Rotterdam, the conference featured a panel of leading experts who addressed pressing policy challenges.
- The HEP team had a total of **10 publications** including 4 articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, 5 book chapters and 1 monograph.
- In collaboration with the WU Institute for Social Policy, the HEP team continues teaching and managing the **5-course WU Bachelor's Specialization in Health and Social Policy**. This specialization meets a strong demand and runs at its full capacity of 30 new Bachelor's students per semester.

## 2 THE HEALTH ECONOMICS AND POLICY DIVISION

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### 2.1 THE TEAM

#### **Marcel Bilger, Professor of Health Economics and Policy, Head of Division**

Marcel Bilger holds a Ph.D. in Economics and Social Sciences with a specialization in Econometrics and Statistics from the University of Geneva. During his doctoral studies, he completed the International Doctoral Program in Health Economics and Policy from the Swiss School of Public Health+. After his Ph.D., Marcel worked as a Consultant for the Development Research Group at the World Bank, and as a Post-doctoral Research Scholar at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. As a tenure-track Assistant Professor, he then led the Laboratory of Health Econometrics in the Signature Program for Health Services and Systems Research at Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore while being Assistant Director for Education in the Program. Marcel has joined the Vienna University of Economics and Business in October 2018 as the new Head of the Health Economics and Policy Group.



During his career, Marcel has published in leading journals in health economics, health services research, and medicine as well as a book on health equity and financial protection. He is deeply passionate about the equity and sustainability of health systems. His work also includes the study of modifiable health risk factors such as obesity, lack of physical activity, and non-adherence to medications. In his new position, he now aims at offering innovative courses in health economics and policy in close partnership with the healthcare industry. His research objectives include developing a new framework that will consider both efficiency and equity considerations in efforts to guide health policymaking in Austria and internationally. His ultimate goal is to contribute to health equity and to the strengthening of health systems, while simultaneously training the next generation of leaders.



#### **Hannah Lou Harrison, Research Assistant**

Hannah Lou has a bachelor's degree in Sociology and is currently finishing her Master in the same subject. She arrived at HEP in October 2021 and worked as an administrative assistant until the end of 2022. During this time, she ensured that administrative processes ran smoothly and were streamlined. Furthermore, Hannah Lou helped with the realization of the organization of conferences with up to 1000 participants and completed important missions for several of HEP's research projects. Due to her scientific background, she was able to familiarise herself quickly and systematically with the tasks and gained detailed insights into the research field of health economics and policy. In 2023, she transitioned to the position of Research Assistant in the HEP research project PRÖMS.

### **Sophie Guthmuller, Assistant Professor**

Sophie Guthmuller holds a Ph.D. in Economics with a specialization in Health Economics from Paris Dauphine University. During her doctoral studies, she completed the International Doctoral Program in Health Economics and Policy from the Swiss School of Public Health+. After her Ph.D. and thanks to this expertise, Sophie has worked on several health econometrics projects and various economic evaluation projects within multi-disciplinary and international research teams. First as Postdoctoral Fellow at the Bordeaux School of Public Health (ISPED) in France, then as Research Fellow in the Academic Unit of Health Economics of the University of Leeds in the UK. Finally, as Economic Analyst at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, she has particularly applied her expertise in public policy evaluation methods at the European level. Sophie has joined the Vienna University of Economics and Business in October 2020 as tenure track Assistant Professor in the Health Economics and Policy Group. Since October 2020, she is also part of the RWI Research Network <https://www.rwi-essen.de/en/forschung-beratung/weitere/rwi-research-network/team>. Her research has led to papers published in French and international peer-reviewed journals, and was granted two PhD prizes. Her research interests include health economics, public policy evaluation and applied econometrics.



### **Daniela Weber, Research Assistant Professor**

Daniela Weber completed a master in technical mathematics from the Vienna University of Technology, a master in Statistics from the University of Vienna and a doctorate with distinction in Social and Economic Sciences from the Vienna University of Economics and Business. Next to her assistant professorship within the HEP division, she is also a research scholar within the Population and Just Societies Program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg. Her research focuses on the demographic and economic perspectives in research on aging and health. She published her research findings in several high level journals such as

PNAS, Scientific Reports or PlosOne. "Aging Health Capital" is her ongoing project funded by OEAW with the prestigious APART GSK grant.

### **Viktoria Szenkurök, PhD Student**

Viktoria Szenkurök joined the Health Economics and Policy (HEP) Group at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in November 2020 as a Teaching and Research Associate. Her research focuses on (long-term) care, particularly in relation to socioeconomic inequalities in the need for and access to care, the working conditions and wages of care workers, as well as the effects of an aging population. In her dissertation project she deals with within- and between-country heterogeneities in the use and provision of informal and formal long-term care. Next to her role at HEP, Viktoria Szenkurök joined the Austrian Institute for Economic Research (WIFO) to work on a joint project related to the political and demographic factors of long-term care needs and public costs in an ageing society. Viktoria Szenkurök holds a Master's degree in Economics from the Vienna University of Economics and Business.





**Maddalena Josefin Lamura, Research Assistant**

Since November 2021, Maddalena J. Lamura is a Research Assistant at the Department of Health Economics and Policy at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. She collaborates in a mixed methods study, researching the spread of precarious working conditions in online platform work and how these impact workers' health. Maddalena attained her Master degree (MSc) in Socio-ecological Economics and Policy at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in October 2021. During the Master, she specialized in Ecological economics, Social policy and Advanced qualitative and quantitative methods. Her research interests lie in the potential for the digitalisation of work to support the socio-ecological transformation, encompassing both micro (working conditions) and macro (eco-social policies) perspectives.

**Susanne Drexler, Doctoral Student**

Susanne Drexler joined the Department of Health Economics and Policy at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in July 2022 as a doctoral researcher. She works on PRÖMS, a third-party financed project in collaboration with the Austrian Social Health insurance (ÖGK) aimed at the development of an instrument for the routine collection of patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) and patient reported experience measures (PREMs) in primary care. Susanne completed an Erasmus Mundus Master in Health Economics and Management (MSc) with a specialisation in Global Health at the University of Oslo, the Erasmus University Rotterdam, and the University in Bologna in December 2021 and holds a Bachelor's degree in Scandinavian Studies from the University of Vienna. Before joining the HEP division, Susanne worked as a research assistant at the Norwegian Institute for Public Health (FHI) and the Institute of Advanced Studies (IHS) where she has contributed to several reports and publications. Her research interests include health policy evaluation, health equity, and health system sustainability.



**Dominik Klaus, PhD Student**

Dominik Klaus has received a Master's degree in Socioeconomics from the Vienna University of Economics and Business and is currently pursuing a PhD in Sociology at the University of Vienna. He has visited the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt for a research stay and he is engaged in the Austrian Association for Sociology as a council member of the section Sociology of Work. Before joining the HEP team, he received an ÖAW scholarship and a research position at the Institute of Sociology of the University of Vienna. His dissertation project deals with recognition and blurring boundaries in digital remote work. Other research interests include new forms of employment, digital service work and decent sustainable work. Next to his research, Dominik teaches courses on the topics of Socioeconomic Theories, Sustainability, Sociology of Work, Social Policy and Literature Research.



**Thomas Arnhold, PhD Student**

Thomas Arnhold is a Guest Researcher and PhD Candidate at the Health Economics and Policy Division. Since 2023, he has been working as a Researcher in the Social Cohesion, Health, and Wellbeing Research Group of the Population and Just Societies Program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA). He holds a Master's degree in Economics from WU. As part of the project Cognitive health in aging society – The role of context for cognitive functioning and related policy implications in Europe (CHIAS), his research focuses on context- and time-related inequalities in cognitive aging.

**Susann Buchstab, Administrative Assistant**

Susann Buchstab holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Business Administration from Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Socioeconomics at WU Vienna. She arrived at HEP in November 2023 and is currently supporting the Division as administrative assistant.

**Anna Lochbihler, Administrative Assistant**

Anna Lochbihler holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Socioeconomics at WU Vienna and in Gender Studies at University of Vienna. She arrived at HEP in March, 2024 and is currently supporting the Division as administrative assistant.



For more information and for the long-version CVs of all the members, please visit the HEP website:

<https://www.wu.ac.at/sozialpolitik/>

## 2.2 CHANGES IN PERSONNEL

Anna Lochbihler joined the Division as Administrative Assistant in March 2024.

## 3 RESEARCH

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The overarching objective of HEP's research effort is to generate new empirical results, methods, and theoretical frameworks that inform health policy making.

### 3.1 PUBLICATIONS

Gerold Stefanie, Hofbauer Johanna, **Klaus Dominik**, Wukovitsch Florian, Neumann Michaela. 2024. Strukturen für klimafreundliche Erwerbsarbeit gestalten. In Hubert Eichmann, Ursula Filipič, Sarah Nowak, Sybille Pirklbauer (Eds.), *Arbeits- und Lebenswelten im sozial-ökologischen Umbau. Sozialpolitik in Diskussion*, 25/2024 (17-27), AK Wien.

**Guthmuller Sophie**, Heger Dörte, Hollenbach Johannes, Werbeck Anna. 2024. The impact of retirement on loneliness in Europe. *Scientific Reports*, 14(26971). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-74692-y>.

Haas Barbara, **Klaus Dominik**, Lamura Maddalena. 2024. Einleitung. In Barbara Haas, Dominik Klaus, Maddalena Lamura (Eds.), *Plattformarbeit: Herausforderungen im deutschsprachigen Kontext, Arbeitsgesellschaft im Wandel* (7-19), Beltz Juventa.

**Klaus Dominik**, Lamura Maddalena, Bilger Marcel, Haas Barbara. 2024. Support and employment preferences in online platform work: A cluster analysis of German-speaking workers. *International Journal of Social Welfare*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12659>.

**Klaus Dominik**, Haas Barbara, Lamura Maddalena. 2024. Schlussbemerkungen und Ausblick. In Barbara Haas, Dominik Klaus, Maddalena Lamura (Eds.), *Plattformarbeit: Herausforderungen im deutschsprachigen Kontext, Arbeitsgesellschaft im Wandel* (208-215), Beltz Juventa.

**Klaus Dominik**. 2024. Anerkennung, Identitätsarbeit und Digitalisierung in entgrenzten Beschäftigungsverhältnissen. Fallstudien zur Unternehmensberatung, Virtuellen Assistenz und Online-Plattformarbeit. Cumulative dissertation, University of Vienna.

Lamura Maddalena, **Klaus Dominik**, Haas Barbara. 2024. Makro-, Meso- und Mikro-Arbeit. In Barbara Haas, Dominik Klaus, Maddalena Lamura (Eds.), *Plattformarbeit: Herausforderungen im deutschsprachigen Kontext, Arbeitsgesellschaft im Wandel* (136-151), Beltz Juventa.

Simmons Cassandra, **Szenkurök Viktoria**, Rodrigues Ricardo. 2024. Care regimes in Europe: a dynamic view of typologies and evolving long-term care policies over time. In Bent Greve, Amilcar Moreira, Minna van Gerven, *Handbook on the Political Economy of Social Policy* (206-2019), Edward Elgar.

**Szenkurök Viktoria**, Weber Daniela, Bilger Marcel. 2024. Informal and formal long-term care utilization and unmet needs in Europe: examining socioeconomic disparities and the role of social policies for older adults. *International Journal of Health Economics and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10754-024-09378-z>.

Umansky Karen, **Weber Daniela**, Lutz Wolfgang. 2025. Revisiting the role of education in attitudes toward immigration in different contexts in Europe. *Genus*, 81(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41118-024-00238-9>.



## 3.2 ACTIVE RESEARCH GRANTS

### Aging Health Capital

**Weber D. (PI).** Aging Health Capital: Evolution of physical and cognitive health over the life course from an international perspective. APART-GSK-Stipend by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (392,000€ for 4 years).

This project aims at investigating the development of old-age health capital from an international perspective. It will identify life course factors associated with cognitive and physical performance and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases of the 50+ population in Europe, the United States, and Asia using several comparable national panel surveys on health and aging. The factors are characteristics on the individual, regional/neighbourhood, and country level and are collected at different points during the life course. Results gained by this research project will be very important for policy makers as societies across the world face an aging population. Therefore, maintaining active older adults with high cognitive and physical capacities and intervene at proper time will be an important objective.

### Cognitive Health in Aging Society

Europe is a leader in population aging, but living longer does not imply aging well for all. As a key source of inequality, the retirement-health nexus has gained importance for both research and health policy planning. Therefore, the goal of this interdisciplinary project is providing a clear understanding of healthy cognitive aging. Conceptually, the focus is on the link between labor market participation and healthy cognitive aging. Analytically, inequalities across time and space will be investigated, where gender and education are central individual dimensions.

**Daniela Weber (Co-PI),** Bordone, V. (PI). Cognitive Health in Aging Society. Funded by the Wiener Wissenschafts- und Technologiefonds (WWTF) Vienna (529,920€ for 4 years)

### HPV vaccine and its contributions to cervical cancer prevention in the Netherlands

**Guthmuller, S. (PI),** O'Donnell O., Wouterse, B. WU Project 2023 incl. Research stay at Erasmus University Rotterdam (17,000€ for 1 year)

This research project aims at studying and quantifying the causal effects of two public health programs implemented in the Netherlands to eliminate cervical cancer: a free access to human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for children and young adults, and regular screening invitations for adults within an organized screening program (OSP). Socioeconomic inequalities in screening and vaccination participation will be studied, as well as the interactions between mother and daughter decisions on cervical cancer prevention. The results of this research will provide robust evidence on the causal effects of these programs and help policy makers in the Netherlands, and in other countries with similar programs, to make informed choices on these two programs. More broadly, they will contribute to the knowledge on cancer prevention measures and vaccine hesitancy.

## PRÖMS: PREMs and PROMs in outpatient care

This is a third-party financed project in collaboration with the Austrian Social Health Insurance (ÖGK) aimed at the development of a survey for the routine collection of patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) and patient reported experience measures (PREMs) in Austrian outpatient care. Currently, the patient perspective is not included in care planning in Austria and existing PREM and PROM instruments do not address the patient-system relationship. The final survey will be implemented digitally and create a continuous feedback loop from patients to ÖGK supporting the ultimate aim of improving Austrian outpatient care. Other results of this project, such as use of PREMs and PROMs in primary care, will be relevant for payers, policy makers, and decision makers in other jurisdictions.

**Bilger M. (Co-PI),**  
Kiss, N. (Co-PI).  
PROMS-/PREMS-  
Instrument. Funded  
by Austrian Social  
Health insurance  
(ÖGK) (337,000€  
until 2026).

## Research Visit at LSE

**Szenkurök V. (PI).** International  
Research Fellowship at the Care  
Policy and Evaluation Centre of the  
London School of Economics and  
Political Science (LSE) in London,  
UK (2,500€ for 1 month).

During her research visit at the LSE, Viktoria Szenkurök worked on her cumulative dissertation, while engaging with the Care Policy and Evaluation Centre's (CPEC)'s research and learning from established experts in long-term care, which fostered collaboration and idea exchange. This also included presented ongoing research (e.g., on pay differentials in the Portuguese long-term care sector) to colleagues at CPEC and a broader audience at the international long-term care policy conference (ILPN), organized by CPEC.

## Spatial and Temporal Analysis of Parental Job Loss Effects on Children's Educational Outcomes: A Study in Vienna

Recent research has shed light on various aspects of the relationship between parental job loss and children's educational outcomes.

Despite the wealth of research on this topic, as pointed out by Ruiz-Valenzuela (2021) more studies are needed, particularly on whether the timing of job loss matters. Furthermore, existing studies have largely overlooked the spatial dimensions of this phenomenon, leaving unanswered questions about how spatial dependencies may influence the impact of job loss on education. The goal of this research project is to analyze the causal impact of parental job loss on the educational outcomes of their children by replying to the following questions: Does parental job loss increase educational disparities? Does parental job loss impact long-term educational outcomes? Does the spatial distribution of parental job loss exacerbate educational inequalities? Do characteristics of peer students have spillover effects on neighboring students' educational outcomes?

**Guthmuller, S. (PI), Auerbach, R.** Spatial and Temporal Analysis  
of Parental Job Loss Effects on  
Children's Educational Outcomes:  
A Study in Vienna. Funded by  
Jubiläumsfond of the city of Vienna  
(19,000€ for 2 years)

## Working conditions and health of crowdworkers

**Bilger M. (Co-PI)**, Haas B. (Co-PI), Lamura M. J. Precarious working conditions and health of crowdworkers? A mixed methods analysis of an online survey and qualitative interviews. Digitalisierungsfonds Arbeit 4.0 by AK Wien (172,223€ for 2.5 years).

The increasing use of cloud computing facilitates the digitalisation of work and its platform-based outsourcing to an undefined amount of external workers. The effects on working conditions and the health of workers play an important role, but remain largely unexplored. The aim of the project is to empirically analyse precarious and health-endangering tendencies of virtual crowdworking, where work is done or uploaded directly in the interface of the platforms. Low-skilled work (microtasks) will be treated in the quantitative-qualitative mixed methods approach as well as demanding knowledge work (macrotasks).

### 3.3 OTHER ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

#### Budget Impact Analysis of Colorectal Screening Programs in Austria

This project aims at calculating the budget impact of various organized colorectal screening programs in Austria. The method is based on a Markov model partly informed by survey data from the Austrian National Health Examination Survey (ATHIS).

**HEP researchers involved:** Marcel Bilger and Sophie Guthmuller

**In collaboration with:** Österreichische Gesundheitskasse (ÖGK)

#### Cancer Screening, Diagnosis, and Mortality in Europe

Cancer is a major social issue in Western societies because of its high incidence and high mortality risk that particularly affects aging societies. The good side of the coin is that cancer is in many cases avoidable, and early detection is key to increase the chance of cure. For that reason, many countries in Europe introduced organised screening programmes (OSP) for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer. However, there are large regional differences across Europe as to whether and when OSPs were introduced. We exploit these variations in this project to comprehensively evaluate OSP. The first OSPs in Europe date back to the 1980s and most of them are still active nowadays. However, after almost 40 years of implementation, a comprehensive evaluation of this policy is still missing. For instance, do OSPs have an impact on screening uptake? Do they reach the population at higher risk? Do OSPs help increasing early diagnoses and reducing mortality? Do OSPs impact inequality in healthcare use and health? This project aim is to fill this gap.

**HEP researchers involved:** Sophie Guthmuller

**In collaboration with:** Vincenzo Carrieri (Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro) and Ansgar Wübker (RWI Essen, Hochschule Harz)

## Cash-for-Care and Its Impact on Informal and Formal Long-Term Care: Evidence from Continental European Countries

Using SHARE data, this study provides novel insights on whether the receipt of cash-for-care (CFC) benefits promotes or displaces informal family or formal care, focusing on traditionally Conservative-corporatist Welfare States in Continental Europe (Austria, Belgium, France and Germany). Results reveal that, overall, CFC promotes informal caregiving, but this does not appear to be the case for formal care. However, country-specific differences were reported.

**HEP researchers involved:** Viktoria Szenkurök

## Effectiveness of Organized Programs on Colorectal Screening Uptake in Austria

This project aims at assessing the impact of organized colorectal screening programs on uptake in Austria. The methods used are interrupted times series, difference-in-difference, and regression discontinuity design that are applied to a large dataset of individual insurance claim data.

**HEP researchers involved:** Marcel Bilger and Sophie Guthmüller

**In collaboration with:** Österreichische Gesundheitskasse (ÖGK)

## Gaining Knowledge in the Relationship Between Air Pollution and Cognition at Older Age

In recent years the role of air pollution on health was researched with a particular focus on lung diseases, cardiovascular diseases or more recent dementia. However, the role of air pollution on cognitive functioning prior to developing a disease such as dementia is understudied. Here, we investigate the role of air pollution on European older adults' cognitive functioning.

**HEP researchers involved:** Daniela Weber

**In collaboration with:** Researchers from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the IIASA in Laxenburg

## Gender Gap in Unmet Needs for Care in Later Life: The Moderating Role of Social Deprivation

This study contributes to the inconclusive discourse on gender-related differences in unmet need for personal care by unveiling the moderating role of social deprivation among older adults in Europe. Using a uniquely comprehensive index including 12 items on poor living conditions, lack of (digital) literacy, neighborhood deprivation, exclusion from social relations and basic access to health care services, our results based on data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) across 15 countries in 2015 reveal that social deprivation, alongside potential material deprivation, is a key factor associated with an increased risk of unmet care needs among older women.

**HEP researchers involved:** Viktoria Szenkurök, Daniela Weber

## Gender Roles in European Societies - Cognitive Gender Differences

Research on gender differences in cognition has shown individual factors such as employment history or education associated with these gender differences. Moreover, there are mesolevel factors such as social norms that might influence men's and women's cognitive health differently. In this project we investigate the role of gender norms within a population on gender differences in older adults cognition.

**HEP researchers involved:** Daniela Weber

**In collaboration with:** Researchers from University of Vienna – Sociology Department

## Mapping Inequalities in Health of Older Adults Around the World: Heterogeneities in Cognitive and Physical Functioning

Addressing the shortcomings of analysing average health levels in a population while preserving the comparability of countries and subpopulations, we estimate Gini coefficients to examine inequalities in physical and cognitive functioning of older adults in 41 countries, stratified by gender and five-year age groups.

**HEP researchers involved:** Daniela Weber, Viktoria Szenkurök

**In collaboration with:** Thomas Arnholt (IIASA)

## Revisiting the 'Care Penalty' in the Portuguese Labour Market: Uncovering (Gender) Pay Differentials in Long-Term Care

Focusing on long-term care (LTC), the article analyses wages and earnings within caring sectors through competing frameworks, including theories of ageism, compensating wage differentials, and gender-based devaluation. To explore how these theories explain pay differentials in LTC, we use a multilevel model based on linked employer-employee data covering virtually all employees in Portugal's manufacturing and service sectors.

**HEP researchers involved:** Viktoria Szenkurök

**In collaboration with:** Ricardo Rodrigues (ISEG, Lisbon, Portugal)

## Spatial and Socioeconomic Inequalities in Access to Reproductive Healthcare

Recent legal changes in access to reproductive health services in high-income countries, such as in Europe and the US raise concerns about their impact on maternal, newborn, and children health. Access to abortion services and medically assisted reproduction will be the focus of this research.

**Spatial and socioeconomic inequalities in access to abortion services and abortion use:**

Inequalities in access to reproductive health care across Europe is an under-researched area. Reproductive health policies and access vary greatly across European countries. However, even where abortion care is legally granted as a right, formal and informal barriers are at work that reduce people's access to safe pregnancy terminations. This includes insufficient service provision, stigmatization of abortion, and information inaccessibility, among others (Culwell and Hurwitz 2013, Calkin and Berny 2021). Qualitative evidence suggests rurality, a social support network, and national language ability limit access to abortions for women. The specific objectives of this study are to explore: geographic differences in the availability of abortion services, geographic differences in abortion use, how the clustering of abortion services correlates with abortion use, socioeconomic differences and rurality at the regional level.

**Spatial inequalities in access to medically assisted reproduction**

The issue of infertility, its treatment through medically assisted reproductive (MAR) technology, and family planning significantly impact social, economic, and political spheres. Thus, understanding how European countries approach

regulation regarding medically assisted reproduction in light of the fundamental right to procreate is essential for addressing legal and ethical controversies surrounding reproductive healthcare. Legislations regarding access to MAR in European countries vary greatly in terms of funding sources and eligibility conditions related to age limits, relationship status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and third-party involvement (Calhaz-Jorge, De Geyter et al. 2020). This part of the research project aims to study the determinants of access to MAR, the use of IVF treatment, and successful pregnancy with IVF, in particular, the role of public funding.

**HEP researchers involved:** *Sophie Guthmuller*

**In collaboration with:** *Heather Brown (Lancaster University), Lorenz Eckhard (WU), Federico Cassarà (WU)*

### The Effect of a Social Education Grant on Academic Success: Evidence from Portugal

This project studies the impact of the higher education grant system for less privileged students in Portugal on academic success. Thanks to administrative data on the applicants, linked with data on students' academic situation, we are able to reconstruct the full academic history of these students. Eligibility to the higher education grant is conditioned on having resources below a threshold. We adopt a regression discontinuity approach based on this exogenous assignment rule to measure the impact of the grant on various outcomes measuring academic success.

**HEP researchers involved:** *Sophie Guthmuller*

**In collaboration with:** *Elena Meroni (Joint Research Centre, European Commission)*

## 3.4 SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATIONS AND RESEARCH VISITS

**Drexler, Susanne.** Attitudes and opinions towards health data sharing in the Austrian population: a mixed-methods study. Momentum Congress: Alternatives, Ossiach, Austria, 2024.

**Drexler, Susanne, Kiss, Noemi, Harrison, Hannah Lou and Bilger, Marcel.** Suitability of validated patient-reported measures for routine assessment of primary care. European Health Economics Association Conference, Vienna, Austria, 2024.

**Drexler, Susanne.** Preferences for sharing patient-reported measures in Austria. European Public Health Conference. Lisboa, Portugal, 2024.

**Guthmuller, Sophie.** Guest Researcher at Erasmus School of Health Policy and Management - Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 09/2024 - 03/2025.

**Guthmuller, Sophie.** 36. Jahrestagung des Ausschusses für Gesundheitsökonomie, Verein für Sozialpolitik (Workshop), Lausanne, Switzerland, 2024.

**Guthmuller, Sophie.** Rotterdam Health Economics Seminar (Seminar), Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 2024.

**Guthmuller, Sophie.** 31<sup>st</sup> European Workshop on Econometrics and Health Economics (Workshop), Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 2024.

**Guthmuller, Sophie.** 16. Jahrestagung der DGGÖ (Conference), Halle, Germany, 2024.

**Guthmuller, Sophie.** Nuremberg Research Seminar in Economics (Seminar), Nuremberg, Germany, 2024.

**Klaus, Dominik, Lamura, Maddalena.** Sozialstaatliche Alternativen und Herausforderungen im Rahmen der Twin Transition. Momentum Congress: Alternatives, Ossiach, Austria, 2024.

**Szenkurök, Viktoria.** Revisiting the care penalty in the Portuguese labour market: Uncovering pay differentials in long-term care. 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on evidence-based Policy in Long-Term Care, Bilbao, Spain, 2024.

**Szenkurök, Viktoria.** Explaining Earnings Differences in and within Female-Dominated Sectors: Evidence for the Care Sector in Portugal. EuHEA Conference: Opening up perspectives on health economics, Vienna, Austria, 2024.

**Szenkurök, Viktoria.** Explaining earnings in and within female-dominated sectors: Evidence for the (Long-term) care sector in Portugal. ISA RC52 Interim Meeting: Navigating turbulence: Professions in an era of multiple crises, Rome, Italy, 2024.



**Szenkurök, Viktoria.** Examining pay gaps in the female-dominated (long-term) care sector: Evidence from Portugal. EuHEA Seminar Series 2023/2024, Vienna, Austria, 2024.

**Weber, Daniela.** Age-friendly cities in Europe: How can we create better urban environments that support healthy ageing and older economies?. ILC Europe Network: Healthy ageing and longevity in Europe: How do we prepare for the 100-year life?, Brussels, Belgium, 2024.

**Weber, Daniela.** Breathing clean air, remembering better: A cross-regional study of air quality and cognitive functioning in European older adults. EAPS Conference, Edinburgh, UK, 2024.

**Weber, Daniela.** Breathing clean air, remembering better: A cross-regional study of air quality and cognitive functioning in European older adults. European Health Economics Association Conference, Vienna, Austria, 2024.

### 3.5 PEER-REVIEWS FOR ACADEMIC JOURNALS

- Age and Ageing
- Frontiers in Public Health
- Health Economics
- Journal of Aging and Health
- Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization
- Journal of Health Economics
- Vienna Yearbook of Population Research
- Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities
- Swiss National Science Foundation (Grant Proposal)

### 3.6 GUEST RESEARCHERS AT HEP

**Prof. Dr. Ansgar Wübker**, from Hochschule Harz, September 2024 – January 2025.

**Dr. Susan Steward**, from the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), Cambridge, Massachusetts, September 2024 – February 2025.

## 4 TEACHING

HEP's teaching philosophy consists in developing the understanding of key health economic concepts, fostering the ability to apply health economic theory to real life situations, and creating skills that are directly relevant to the industry.

### 4.1 COURSES

The HEP team teaches approximately 16 hours per week on average at all academic levels. At the Bachelor's level, HEP, in collaboration with the Institute for Social Policy, offers a 5-course Specialization that is open to students enrolled in three different programs: Business and Economics, Business Law, and Business, Economics, and Social Sciences. This Specialization in Health and Social Policy enables the Division to teach health economics and policy within a broader interdisciplinary perspective and to reach a larger number of students. This specialization is currently running at its full capacity of 30 new Bachelor's students per semester.

The table below summarizes HEP's teaching portfolio. More detail on each course offered can be found in the WU course catalogue (<https://learn.wu.ac.at/vvz/>).

Course	Program	HEP Lecturer(s)	Semester
<b>Economics and Policy of the Public Healthcare Industry</b>	Bachelor's Specialization in Health and Social Policy (Course II)	Viktoria Szenkurök	SS 2024 WS 2024/25
<b>Economics and Policy of the Private Healthcare Industry</b>	Bachelor's Specialization in Health and Social Policy (Course III)	Marcel Bilger	SS 2024 WS 2024/25
<b>Social Policy Evaluation<sup>a</sup></b>	Bachelor's Specialization in Health and Social Policy (Course V)	Sophie Guthmuller Ulrike Schneider Marcel Bilger	SS 2024 WS 2024/25
<b>Gesundheit und nachhaltiges Altern</b>	Bachelor's in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences	Daniela Weber	SS 2024
<b>Field Course: Economic and Social Policy</b>	Master's in Economics	Sophie Guthmuller	SS 2023 WS 2023/24
<b>Interdisciplinary Socioeconomic Research Lab I: Quantitative Research in Social Policy<sup>a</sup></b>	Master's in Socioeconomics	Marcel Bilger Ulrike Schneider	WS 2024/25
<b>Interdisciplinary Socioeconomic Research Lab II: Quantitative Research in Social Policy<sup>a</sup></b>	Master's in Socioeconomics	Marcel Bilger, Ulrike Schneider	SS 2024
<b>Applied Socioeconomic Theories and Methods</b>	Master's in Socioeconomics	Marcel Bilger, Susanne Drexler	SS 2024 WS 2024/25
<b>Field Course: Economic and Social Policy – Program Evaluation<sup>b</sup></b>	Master's in Economics	Ansgar Wübker	WS 2024/25
<b>Mikroökonomie Teil 1: Gesundheitsökonomie</b>	MBA in Health Care Management	Marcel Bilger	SS 2024

<sup>a</sup> Taught in collaboration with the Institute for Social Policy.

<sup>b</sup> External lecturers.

## 4.2 EXAMINATIONS, AND THESIS SUPERVISIONS

### Ph.D. and Doctoral theses supervised

- Arnhold, Thomas. Cognitive health, Work and Retirement in an Aging Society. WU Ph.D. Program in Economics and Social Sciences (ongoing).
- Drexler, Susanne. Socioeconomic and policy evaluation of patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) and patient reported experience measures (PREMs) in Austrian outpatient care, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (ongoing).
- Föbleitner, Sophie. Inequalities within the Austrian Health Care System, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (ongoing).
- Gösenbauer, Barbara. Socioeconomic Analysis of Quality and Cost of Outpatient and Hospitalized Long-Term Care in Austria, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (ongoing).
- Paterno, Nathanael. Economics and Financing of Gene therapies, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (ongoing).
- Schneider, Peter. Pharmaceutical Policy for High-priced and innovative medicines, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (ongoing).
- Szenkurök, Viktoria. Socioeconomic Inequalities in Long-Term Care. WU Ph.D. Program in Economics and Social Sciences (ongoing).

### Master's theses supervised

- Auerbach, Robert. The impact of parental job loss on children's educational outcomes, Master's thesis in Economics (ongoing).
- Cassara', Federico Salvatore. Studying variations in county-level abortion rates in England and Wales: a panel analysis for 2017-2021, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (completed).
- De Ranitz, Jonkheer Sebastiaan Gideon. The impact of colorectal cancer screening strategies on mortality: Evidence from Austria, Master's thesis in Economics (completed).
- Eckhard, Lorenz. Disparities in Abortion Access and Socioeconomic Hardship among Mothers in the USA, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (completed).
- Fischeneder, Andreas. The Impact of Different Colorectal Cancer Screening Programs on Take-Up in Austria, Master's thesis in Economics (completed).
- Hammer, Siegfried Haik. The short-term effect of retirement on life satisfaction: a non-parametric fuzzy RDD approach, Master's thesis in Economics (completed).
- Kantorova, Sabina. Colorectal cancer screening in Austria: Socioeconomic gradient in uptake, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (completed).
- Kettl, Julian. Sleep as a question of health inequality amongst cloud workers, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (completed).
- Klemm, Paulina Antonia. Understanding the Dynamics of Influenza Vaccination in European Countries, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (completed).
- Koisser, Lea. Organized colorectal cancer screening in Austria: a need-gap analysis, Master's thesis in Economics (completed).
- Lechner, Stephan. Impact of the announcement until implementation of Brexit on the United Kingdom healthcare workforce using the synthetic control group method, Master's thesis in Economics (ongoing).

- Pilmes, Luca Andreas. A quantitative analysis of Austrian food inflation along the value chain, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (ongoing).
- Rösler, David. Beyond Numbers: An Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Suicide Rates in Austria, Master's thesis in Economics (completed).
- Schreml, Stephan. Personality traits and risky health behaviours among students, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (completed).

#### **Bachelor's theses supervised**

- Ayaz, Mehmet. Weighing the Gains: A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Weight Training vs. Calisthenics on Public Health Outcomes, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (ongoing).
- Dinhobl, Maria. Evaluierung des österreichischen Vorsorgeuntersuchungsprogramms – eine Betrachtung in der Lebensverlaufsperspektive, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (completed).
- Gabdullin, Rauan. Factors Influencing Patient Loyalty in Dentistry: A Review of Customer- and Service-Related Aspects, Bachelor's thesis in Business and Economics (completed).
- Gugele, Svenja Tabea. COVID-19 and access to abortion, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (ongoing).
- Hössinger, Hannah. Multifaktorielle Einflüsse auf die HPV-Impfbereitschaft junger Frauen – Eine Scoping Review der Barrieren und Anreize für die HPV-Impfung junger Frauen, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (completed).
- Nagy, Emese. Systematic Applications of Lung Cancer Screening and Possibilities in Austria, Bachelor's thesis in International Business (ongoing).
- Nikcevic, Naomi. Sozioökonomische Determinanten der physischen Gesundheit, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (completed).
- Pavonic, Anastasia Iris. Nützlichkeit digitaler Gesundheitsanwendungen zur Förderung der psychischen Gesundheit von Kindern, Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen: Review über die Wirksamkeit sowie Potenziale und Risiken, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (completed).
- Riedmann, Simon Paul. The effect of financial and socioeconomic factors on breast cancer screening rates: a cross-country comparison, Bachelor's thesis in Business and Economics (completed).
- Sagmüller, Paul. Optimisation of Resource Allocation in Intensive Care Medicine, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (ongoing).
- Wang Xu, Victor. Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of probiotics for weight loss, Bachelor's thesis in International Business (ongoing).
- Wastler, Katharina. Auswirkungen von Umweltbedingungen auf die Gesundheit sozial benachteiligter Gruppen in Österreich, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (ongoing).
- Wohlkönig, Sebastian. The emergence of Fentanyl use in the US and Europe: An analysis of the determinants of Fentanyl use in the US and Europe, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (completed).
- Wöß, Lena Marie. Strategic Patenting in Pharmaceuticals: Impact on Generic Competitors and Regulatory Measures to Enhance Market Entry, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (completed).

## 5 OUTREACH

The goals of HEP's outreach activities is to network with the healthcare industry and academic researchers, and communicate research results and engage with the public.

**In 2024, the HEP team conducted the following outreach activities:**

### **ASEP Health**

Marcel Bilger is member of the health working group for the new Austrian Socio-Economic Panel (ASEP).

Marcel Bilger is Member of the Extended Board of Directors of the Austrian Health Economics Association (ATHEA) since January 2024.

### **ATHEA**

### **Erasmus School of Health Policy and Management**

Sophie Guthmuller worked at the Erasmus School of Health Policy and Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands from September 2024 to February 2025. This research stay was funded by a research contract from WU Vienna.

The HEP team is organizing the 2024 European Health Economics Association (EUHEA) Conference, in partnership with the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) with the support of Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (<http://www.euhea.eu/>).

### **EuHEA**

### **Frontiers in Public Health**

Daniela Weber is an editorial board member of Frontiers in Public Health in the section Aging and Public Health since 2023.

Sophie Guthmuller is a Member of the Platform „RegisterForschung.at“ to promote access to administrative data to researchers and the creation of the Austrian Micro Data Center (AMDC).

### **Register Forschung.at**

### **WHO**

Daniela Weber is a Member of the “WHO Consortium on Metrics and Evidence for Healthy Ageing”, which aims at reviewing and suggesting metrics for healthy ageing within the framework of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030.

Dominik Klaus and Maddalena Lamura held a workshop at the Chamber of Labour about the results from their study “Prekarität und Gesundheitsbelastungen in der Online-Plattformarbeit”.

### **Workshop at Chamber of Labor**

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