

Health Economics and Policy

Annual Report 2020



Health Economics and Policy (HEP) Division

2020 Annual Activity Report

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1. Highlights

- WU created a **new tenure-track Assistant Professor position in Health Economics and Policy** enabling HEP to hire Dr. Sophie Guthmuller from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission
- Dr. Anna-Theresa Renner successfully **completed her Doctoral dissertation** "Waiting time, avoidable hospitalisations and patient mobility: The economics of healthcare access" and received the **AK-Wissenschaftspreis of Upper Austria** for her work
- Dr. Anna-Theresa Renner received a position of **tenure-track Assistant Professor at TU Wien**, and HEP hired Viktoria Szenkurök, MSc. to fill its prae doc position
- Dr. Daniela Weber was **awarded the APART-GSK-Stipend** by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (€ 340,000) for her project "Aging Health Capital: Evolution of physical and cognitive health over the life course from an international perspective"
- Dr. Sophie Guthmuller became the Principal Investigator of the "Loneliness amongst older adults" project, which is part of the **Leibniz Science Campus Ruhr** "Regional Variation in Health Care"
- The HEP team published article in reputable peer-reviewed academic journals such as **Value in Health**, the **European Journal of Health Economics**, and the **European Journal of Ageing**, and **PLOS One**.
- WU was awarded the organization of the **European Health Economics Association (EUHEA) Conference 2024**, in partnership with the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) and Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG).
- HEP, in collaboration with the Institute for Social Policy, created a **new 5-course Specialization in Health and Social Policy** to the WU Bachelor's programs

2. The Health Economics and Policy Division

2.1. The team

Marcel Bilger, Professor of Health Economics, 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.

Tina Radler, Administrative Assistant

Tina has a Master's degree in Theater, Film and Media (Mag.phil.) from the University of Vienna. She arrived at HEP in February 2016. She is HEP's eyes and ears when it comes to administrative duties, but she also follows research projects from a close perspective and developed the HEP website. Before joining HEP, she has worked as an assistant for an orthopaedic surgeon in Vienna and in the HR Department of a publicly traded real estate company. Tina is familiar with standard computer packages and with film-editing and web-editing programs. Her mother tongue is German, she's perfectly fluent in English and is taking French and Spanish classes regularly.

Daniela Weber, 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, whereas the international perspective is of her particular interest. Next to societal determinants of cognitive and physical

aging such as differential effects of societal living conditions on men's and women's cognitive functioning, she also investigates the role of behavioral and socioeconomic determinants on healthy aging.

Sophie Guthmuller, Assistant Professor, tenure track (joined in October 2020)

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/forschung-und-beratung/network/rwi-research-fellows/>. 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.

Viktoria Szenkurök, PhD student, HEP Division (joined in November 2020)

Viktoria Szenkurök joined the Department of Health Economics and Policy at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in November 2020 as a Teaching and Research Associate. Her dissertation project will deal with socioeconomic and sociodemographic disparities in the use and provision of informal (long term) care, focusing in particular on European Countries. Viktoria received her Master's degree (MEc) in Economics from the Vienna University of Economics and Business in October 2020. In her Master thesis she analyzed the linkage between demographic trends, poverty and income inequality. As Teaching and Research Associate her scientific research focus lies on health economics, demography (i.e. population ageing) and distributional economics. For her first project, she is particularly interested in socioeconomic inequalities in the use and provision of informal long term care, and potentially works with survey data.

Anna-Theresa Renner, PhD student (left in September 2020)

Anna-Theresa Renner joined the Health Economics and Policy Division at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in fall 2016 as a Doctorate student. Her dissertation is using administrative data to investigate geographical and socioeconomic inequalities in the access to primary healthcare, focussing in particular on Austria. Anna holds a Master of Science in Health Economics Policy and Law from Erasmus University (The Netherlands) and a Master in Economics (Mag.rer.soc.oec) from the Department of Economics of the University of Vienna. Before joining the Division, Anna was a researcher at the Austrian Public Health Institute, Department for Health Economics (Gesundheit Österreich GmbH). Her research focus is on the accessibility and utilization of outpatient health care services. She is particularly interested in socioeconomic inequalities in the distribution and reachability of healthcare services, and mostly works with comprehensive administrative data sources. Methodologically, she is interested in how to incorporate the spatial dimension into health economic and health service research.

Gabriel Haintz, Tutor (part-time)

Gabriel holds a Bachelor in Sociology from the University of Vienna and is currently enrolled as a student in the WU Master's in Socioeconomics.

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

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

2.2. Changes in Personnel

New Tenure-Track Assistant Professor position

In January 2020, WU upgraded the postdoctoral position vacated by Dr. Mujaheed Shaikh in April 2019 to a tenure-track position. This type of position is more stable and will enable the Division to create more durable expertise in health economics and policy. In addition, tenure-track positions are more attractive, which facilitated sourcing on the competitive international academic job market.

The position which was posted on Euraxess in February 2020, attracted 23 high-level candidates with a near-equal gender split (11 women, 12 men). The selection process was led by the Division Head in consultation with all Full Professors in the WU Department of Socioeconomics. After a first pre-selection, 9 candidates were interviewed over video conference by the Division Head the following month. In April 2020, 4 short-listed candidates were invited for a remote job talk by the Department of Socioeconomics. After ranking the candidates according to a multi-criteria scoring system, the recruitment process was reviewed by the Human Resources and the Vice-Rector for Research and Personnel. In June 2020, Dr. Sophie Guthmuller, the successful candidate, signed her work contract. Dr. Sophie Guthmuller started work in October 2020.

Prae doc position

As Dr. Anna Renner successfully defended her Ph.D. thesis in May 2020 and became a tenure-track Assistant Professor at TU Wien, HEP sought a new Ph.D. candidate. A total of 27 candidates (15 women, 12 men) applied to the position. The Division Head and Dr. Daniela Weber shortlisted, interviewed, and ranked 4 candidates. After vetting of the recruitment process by the Human Resources, the successful candidate, Ms. Viktoria Szenkurök, signed her contract and started working in November 2020.

Tutor position

In efforts to support the Division's teaching and research activities, a WU Master's student, Mr. Gabriel Haintz, was hired as a tutor for one day a week for a duration of 8 months.

3. Research

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

Abalos, Jeffrey, **Weber, Daniela**, Booth, Heather, Goujon, Anne, Steiber, Nadia, Cruz, Grace T. 2020. Is children's education associated with parental health? Evidence from the Philippines. IIASA Working Paper. Laxenburg, Austria: WP-20-017.

Bilger, Marcel, Özdemir, Semra, Finkelstein, Eric. 2020. Demand for Cancer Screening Services: Results From Randomized Controlled Discrete Choice Experiments. *Value in Health*. 23 1246-1255.

Bilger, Marcel, Shah, Mitesh, Tan, Ngiam Chuan, Tan, Cynthia, Bundoc, Fillipinas, Bairavi, Joann, Finkelstein, Eric. 2021. Process- and Outcome-Based Financial Incentives to Improve Self-Management and Glycemic Control in People with Type 2 Diabetes in Singapore: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *The Patient - Patient-Centered Outcomes Research*, forthcoming.

Garas A, **Guthmuller S**, Lapatinas A. The development of nation conditions the disease space, *PlosOne*, *forthcoming*.

Guthmuller S, Paruolo P, Verzillo S. Positive externalities of EU actions on sustainability of Health Systems. In *The Sustainability of Health Care Systems in Contributions to Economic Analysis*, eds: Baltagi B.H, Moscone F, Emerald Publisher, *forthcoming*.

Loichinger Elke and **Weber Daniela**. 2020. Combining working life and health expectancies. In: *International Handbook of Health Expectancy*. Springer, Cham, pp. 935-941. ISBN 978-3-030-37666-6.

Renner, Anna-Theresa. 2020. Inefficiencies in a healthcare system with a regulatory split of power: a spatial panel data analysis of avoidable hospitalisations in Austria. *European Journal of Health Economics*. 21 85-104.

Renner, Anna-Theresa. 2020. "Waiting time, avoidable hospitalisations and patient mobility: The economics of healthcare access". Dissertation for the degree of Doktorat in Sozial und Wirtschaftswissenschaften at the Vienna University of Economics and Business.

Weber, Daniela and Loichinger Elke. Live longer, retire later? Developments of healthy life expectancies and working life expectancies between age 50-59 and age 60-69 in Europe. *European Journal of Ageing* 10.1007/s10433-020-00592-5.

Weber, Daniela and Scherbov, Sergei. 2020. Prospects of activity limitations among older adults in 23 low and middle income countries. *Scientific Reports*. 10 (10442).

3.2. Research Grants

Guthmuller S. (PI), Heger D., Wübker A. Project 1 "Loneliness amongst older adults" in Research Area C) of the Leibniz Science Campus Ruhr "Regional Variation in Health Care" that was granted 1.2 Million funding for the period 2020-2024.

Guthmuller S. (PI). Regional political changes, social capital, and individual health in Europe. Submitted to the William R. Waters Research Grant 2021.

Weber D. (PI). Aging Health Capital: Evolution of physical and cognitive health over the life course from an international perspective. Received from the APART-GSK-Stipend by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (€ 392,000). 2020-2024.

Weber D. (Co-PI). REdesigning HeAlth ProduCTs 2.0. Submitted to WISS-2025 by the Amt der Salzburger Landesregierung (total amount EUR 120,000 for 18 months).

Weber D. (PI within international consortium). Caregiving in an Ageing society - using Resources in an Equitable and Feasible manner to give Users and relatives a healthy independent Life (CAREFUL). Submitted to the JPI MYBL transnational Call 2020 (total amount EUR 1.8 million for 36 months).

3.3. Ongoing Research Projects

A systematic review of social cohesion measurements in empirical research. A public health perspective

We aim to systematically review the validity of applied social cohesion measurements to test contextual effects of social cohesion on health. After many empirical and theoretical contributions to this multidisciplinary field of research, we will review how social cohesion has been measured so far in light of a now converging conceptual debate. The criteria along which identified measurements will be reviewed are inspired by psychometric (COSMIN Consensus-based standards for the Selection of Health Measurement Instruments) and econometric methodology. Additionally, this review aims to provide a foundation for new innovative measurement approaches by assessing which errors are inherent to how social cohesion has been measured so far. Finally, considering the potential unintended overlaps with other concepts like social inclusion, social support, social environment, social capital, or social integration, we aim to contrast our findings with previous reviews on such related concepts.

HEP researchers involved: *Marcel Bilger*

In collaboration with: *Moritz Oberndorfer, Igor Grabovac, Lukas Sramek, Thomas Schober, and Thomas Dorner (MedUni Wien, Austria)*

Discrete Choice Experiments to Analyze Long-term Care Financing Preferences among Midlife Singaporeans

The past three decades has seen rapid population aging in advanced economies. In Singapore, the number of seniors with activity limitations is projected to more than double between 2010 and 2030. At the same time, nuclearization of families, increased labor force participation by women and increased population mobility has reduced the potential supply of informal caregivers around the world. Many governments now face the urgent challenge of financing and providing

formal long-term care in a fiscally sustainable manner. One way to mitigate the financial burden on the public sector is by encouraging individuals to prepare for their own long-term care expenses through insurance. Globally, long-term care (LTC) insurance coverage rates are low and, for those who are enrolled, only part of their potential future LTC expenses are covered. We propose to conduct a series of four surveys involving Singaporean citizens aged 40 to 49 to choose between hypothetical insurance plans and financing scenarios. The objective is to analyze the preferences of the respondents for different characteristics of LTC insurance plans and alternative financing mechanisms. Our overall aim is to increase financial protection against LTC costs in Singapore and internationally. This project is funded was awarded a Health Services Research Competitive Grant from the Ministry of Health of Singapore (NMRC/HSRG/0069/2016).

HEP researchers involved: *Marcel Bilger*

In collaboration with: *Wan Chen Graham (Agency for Integrated Care, Singapore)*

Targeted Incentives: On the Non-Fungibility of Incentives

Incentives for behavior change generally yield small and short-lived benefits. We hypothesize that targeting incentives at an appropriate mental account can increase effectiveness. We test this hypothesis via a field experiment with taxi drivers. Half received a monetary reward for increased activity and half were offered the equivalent amount framed as the value of one day's taxi rental. Both groups increased activity levels—during and after the incentives were stopped—but the increase was significantly greater for those in the mental accounting treatment. Results support the non-fungibility of incentives and the value of targeting incentives at salient mental accounts.

HEP researchers involved: *Marcel Bilger*

In collaboration with: *Uri Gneezy (UC San Diego, USA), Teck-Hua Ho (National University of Singapore, Eric Finkelstein (Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore)*

Randomized Control Trial to Improve Hypertension Outcomes using Wireless Home Blood Pressure Monitoring with Automatic Outcome-based Feedback and Financial Incentives

High blood pressure (hypertension) is a major risk factor for cardiovascular morbidity and mortality. In Singapore this disease is particularly burdensome with 30.4% of deaths the result of cardiovascular disease (CVD). Despite the risks of hypertension and availability of effective treatment, a substantial number of patient's have uncontrolled blood pressure. Home blood pressure monitoring (HBPM) has been shown to produce modest reductions in blood pressure. One strategy to improve adherence to HBPM, patient self-management, and ultimately health outcomes is to provide timely and personalized advice based on blood pressure results. New technologies, such as Bluetooth enabled HBPMs and mobile phones, have made instant transmission of results to health care providers and timely feedback to patients possible. We propose a 6-month intervention with 228 hypertensive patients with high blood pressure. The proposed trial seeks to determine whether an intervention with wireless HBPM and automatic outcome-based feedback with and without financial incentives is effective at reducing blood pressure compared to regular HBPM. This project is funded was awarded a Health Services Research Competitive Grant from the Ministry of Health of Singapore (NMRC/HSRG/0052/2015).

HEP researchers involved: *Marcel Bilger*

In collaboration with: *Agnes Ying Leng Koong, Ian Kwong Yun Phoon, Ngiap Chuan Tan, Juliana Bahadin (SingHealth Polyclinics, Singapore) and Joann Bairavi, Ada Portia M. Batcagan-Abueg and Eric Finkelstein (Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore)*

Predicting Behavioral Change using Stated Preferences: Comparison of Preferences Expressed in a Discrete Choice Experiment to Results of a Randomized Controlled Trial on Pedometer-Based Activity Programs

Initially developed in marketing science, Discrete Choice Experiments (DCEs) are being applied in an increasing number of fields, including the environment, transportation, and health. While DCEs can be used to analyze a great variety of issues such as calculating market shares, quantifying the value of non-market goods, and predicting uptake of new services, all applications share a key feature that is intrinsic to DCEs: respondents need to trade between the attributes of the choice tasks they are presented with. The validity of all studies involving DCEs thus critically depends on the validity of the tradeoffs made by the respondents. A well-documented concern is that various hypothetical biases can affect the elicitation of these tradeoffs. The external validity of DCEs is currently under-researched because few settings provide the analyst with data on both revealed and stated preferences simultaneously. In this study, we administered a DCE to participants of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to make it possible to compare these two types of data. We focus on one type of hypothetical bias that can adversely affect the validity of DCEs. When an attribute relates to a behavior, respondents might underestimate the effort that is required from them to change their behavior and report unrealistic tradeoffs. While such potential bias can in theory apply to numerous settings, its study is especially relevant to health as respondents might be overly optimistic while stating not only their participation in new public health programs but also the extent of their involvement.

HEP researchers involved: *Marcel Bilger*

In collaboration with: *Eric Finkelstein and Isha Chaudhry (Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore)*

Trends in Socioeconomic Inequality in Obesity among Children and Adults in the United States

In a period of steady increase in income inequality, it is crucial to monitor the relationship between income and health. Given the considerable health and economic burden of obesity, such monitoring helps tailoring the medical and policy response to the epidemic, and planning the financing of obesity-related costs. To quantify socioeconomic inequality in obesity and the obesity gap between poor and non-poor in 2015-2016, and examine trends from 1999 through 2016 in these measures. The data analysed consists of pooled datasets that include measured weight and height from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) over the 1999-2016 period. Each dataset is cross-sectional and nationally-representative of the US civilian noninstitutionalized population over a 2-year period. Child (2 to 19), working adult (20 to 65) and older adult (66 to 85) populations have been studied. Socioeconomic status was measured using the family poverty income ratio (PIR), and poverty defined as $PIR < 1.3$. Obesity was measured using body mass index (BMI) z-scores relative to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) BMI-for-age growth charts, and the obesity threshold set at the 95th%ile of the CDC charts. Socioeconomic inequality was measured by Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) concentration indices for the prevalence, depth, and severity of obesity, and the obesity gap measured by mean differences in these three aspects of obesity between poor and non-poor.

HEP researchers involved: *Marcel Bilger*

In collaboration with: *Eric Finkelstein and Fillipinas Bundoc (Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore)*

The impact of Breast Cancer Organised Screening Programmes on uptake, inequality, and mortality

We study the impact of Organised Screening Programmes (OSP) for Breast Cancer in Europe on mammography uptake, inequality, and mortality. When an OSP is in place, all women within a certain age group receive, every two years, an invitation for free breast screening. To identify the causal impact of this invitation, we exploit the heterogeneity across European regions in the availability of OSP and in the age eligibility across regions with OSP. Our analysis is based on three data sources: (1) regional information on OSP, (2) individual information on mammography uptake, socioeconomic characteristics, health, and lifestyle related risk factors of women in 21 European countries, and (3) cancer registry data on breast cancer incidence, and mortality. We find new evidence that screening increases by more than 30 percentage points when women are invited. First results from the heterogeneity analysis show that women that respond to the invitation are those at higher risk of developing cancer and those with low preventive healthcare habits. OSP with a personal invitation manage to reach asymptomatic women at higher risk of developing cancer and with low preventive healthcare habits, i.e. women that are less likely to go for a mammography otherwise. Further analyses will investigate the impact of OSP on socioeconomic inequalities, breast cancer incidence, and mortality.

HEP researchers involved: *Dr. Sophie Guthmuller*

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

Loneliness among the European ageing population

The objective of this research project is to study loneliness among ageing populations. More specifically, the aims include: (1) analysing the correlation between the rates of loneliness and living in a region with declining and ageing populations, (2) studying the impact of retirement on loneliness. (3) Investigating the link between loneliness and health and health care use in ageing populations. To identify the causal impact of loneliness, advanced counterfactual impact evaluation methods will be used.

This research (recorded as Project 1 "Loneliness amongst older adults" in Research Area C) is part of the Leibniz Science Campus Ruhr "Regional Variation in Health Care" that was granted 1,2 Million funding for 4 years, <https://www.rwi-essen.de/lscr>.

HEP researchers involved: *Dr. Sophie Guthmuller*

In collaboration with: *Dörte Heger (RWI Essen), Anna Werbeck (RWI Essen), Ansgar Wübker (RWI Essen)*

Regional political changes, social capital, and individual health in Europe

In recent years, two contrasting patterns emerged in the European political landscape. On the one hand, the rise in the far-right parties between 2009 and 2014, and on the other hand, a significant increase of vote shares for Environmentalist and Green parties in the last European election in 2019. Furthermore, these right wing and environmentalist parties have also achieved great success in domestic politics. The aim of the research is to study the relationship between the larger vote shares of both parties at the local levels and social capital and individual health. More specifically, the project is divided in two parts: (1) To uncover the relationship between larger vote shares for right-wing parties and social capital and health, and measure the impact of the rise of far-right parties between 2009 and 2014 in Europe, on mutual trust, feeling of security, and mental and physical health using novel spatial econometrics

and panel event based study methods. (2) To analyze the socioeconomic and environmental determinants that led to the rise of the Green parties in 2019 using a survival analysis design. Thanks to novel spatial estimation techniques and longitudinal data, this research will contribute to this existing knowledge by identifying more precisely, and measuring the impact of radical rights on social capital and health using the rise in far right shares and integrating the determinants that led to this rise into the model. In parallel, the individual and regional factors that led to the recent rise of Green parties in Europe has to the best of our knowledge, not been studied so far but is likely to be associated to strong concerns with an alternative life style through less emphasis on material goods, and more individualism, equal rights, and participative democracy.

HEP researchers involved: *Dr. Sophie Guthmuller*

In collaboration with: *Sandy Tubeuf (Université catholique de Louvain) and Nicola Pontarollo (University of Brescia)*

Aging Health Capital

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 noncommunicable 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/neighborhood, 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 maker 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.

HEP researchers involved: *Dr. Daniela Weber*

In collaboration with: *Dr. Elke Loichinger (Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, Germany), Prof. Agneta Herlitz (Karolinska Institutet, Sweden)*

The Role of Education and Age Cohort in Shaping Attitudes toward Immigration in Europe

This project complements the existing literature on determinants of attitudes to foreign populations by explicitly addressing the role of education using repeated cross-sectional data combined with contextual information on yearly migrant inflow rates to European countries.

HEP researchers involved: *Dr. Daniela Weber*

In collaboration with: *Dr. Karen Umansky (University Potsdam, Germany)*

REdesigning HeAlth ProduCTs 2.0

The objective of this project is to focus on the users' perspective when developing care products. The targeted region for this interdisciplinary project is Salzburg, where collaborations with partners from demand and supply side are confirmed.

HEP researchers involved: *Dr. Daniela Weber*

In collaboration with: *Dr. Robert Zniva (Fachhochschule Salzburg GmbH)*

3.4. Scientific Presentations and Research Visits

Renner, Anna-Theresa (presenter). Provider quality and patient mobility: Is there a network effect in hospital choice? Winterseminar der Gesellschaft für Regionalforschung, February 2020.

Renner, Anna-Theresa (presenter). Inter-regional patient mobility and the accessibility of public healthcare services - Does distance go far enough? Austrian Economic Association (NOeG), February 2020.

Renner, Anna-Theresa (presenter). Provider quality and patient mobility: Is there a network effect in hospital choice? Annual Meeting of the Austrian Health Economics Association (ATHEA), February 2020.

Weber, Daniela (invited talk). Health Economics – a short introduction. CeMM Research Center for Molecular Medicine of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, October 2020

Szenkurök, Viktoria (participant). GSA Annual Scientific Meeting Online “Why Age Matters”, November 2020.

Weber, Daniela (presenter). Women’s social empowerment and gender differences in adult’s cognitive competences. International Symposium, Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting, November 2020.

Guthmuller, Sophie (presenter). The impact of Breast Cancer Organised Screening Programmes on Uptake, Inequality, and Mortality. CINCH Essen Health Economics Virtual Seminar, CINCH Essen, December 2020.

3.5. Peer-Reviews for Academic Journals

- Age and Ageing
- Ageing and Society
- Comparative Population Studies
- Health Economics
- Journal of Aging and Health
- Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences
- Journal of Health Economics
- Social Science and Medicine
- Value in Health

3.6. Guest Researchers at HEP

Sonja Spitzer, Ph.D. (University of Vienna, Austria) Health measures and health care utilisation in ageing populations: Demographic and economic perspectives. Virtual Presentation at the Research Seminar of the Department of Socioeconomics, May 2020.

Prof. Dean Lilard (The Ohio State University, USA) visited HEP in July 2020 to discuss the costs associated with the policy measures against the novel coronavirus.

Prof. Hans van Kippersluis (Erasmus School of Economics). Dynamic complementarity in skill production: evidence from genes and birth order. Virtual Presentation at the Research Seminar of the Department of Socioeconomics, Nov. 2020.

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 taught approx. 16 hours per week on average at all academic levels. The table below summarizes HEP's teaching portfolio.

Course	Program	HEP Lecturer(s)	Semester
Economics and Policy of the private Healthcare Industry	Bachelor's in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences	Marcel Bilger	SS 2020
Economics and Policy of the public Healthcare Industry	Bachelor's in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences	Marcel Bilger Anna-Theresa Renner	SS 2020 WS 2020/21
Interdisciplinary Socio-Economic Research Lab I: Quantitative Methods for evaluation of health and health policy	Master's in Socioeconomics	Marcel Bilger Daniela Weber	WS 2020/21
Interdisciplinary Socio-Economic Research Lab II: Quantitative Methods for evaluation of health and health policy	Master's in Socioeconomics	Marcel Bilger Daniela Weber	SS 2020
Applied Socio-Economic Theories and Methods: Social Epidemiology	Master's in Socioeconomics	Marcel Bilger Sophie Guthmuller Anna-Theresa Renner	SS 2020 WS 2020/21
Globalisation and Social Policy II ^a	Master's in Socio-Ecological Economics and Policy	Marcel Bilger Sophie Guthmuller	WS 2020/21
Mikroökonomie Teil 1: Gesundheitsökonomie	MBA in Health Care Management	Marcel Bilger	WS 2020/21
Advanced Quantitative Methods for Social and Economic Research	Ph.D. in Economic and Social Sciences	Marcel Bilger	WS 2020/21

^a Taught in collaboration with the Institute for Social Policy.

HEP, in collaboration with the Institute for Social Policy, also successfully added a new 5-course Specialization to 3 Bachelor's programs: Business and Economics, Business Law, and Business, Economics, and Social Sciences. This new Specialization in Health and Social Policy will enable HEP to teach health economics and policy within a broader interdisciplinary perspective and to reach a larger number of students. This new specialization will have a capacity for 30 new Bachelor's students each semester and will start in the summer semester 2021.

4.2. Examinations, and Thesis Supervisions

Examination of Habilitationen (new subsection, includes 2019 output)

Naqvi, Asjad. Understanding the environment-economy nexus through a spatial lens. Habilitation to teach in the field of Economics, October 2020.

Peer, Stefanie. The economics of travel behavior. Habilitation to teach in the field of Economics, November 2019.

Pennerstorfer, Astrid. Nonprofit sector dynamics: Essays on sector growth, funding sources and employee-volunteer relations. Habilitation to teach in the field of Socioeconomics, December 2019.

Examination of theses

Sauerberg, Markus. Assessing population health in Europe: methodological issues and empirical findings, WU Ph.D. Program in Economic and Social Sciences.

Spitzer, Sonja. Health measures and healthcare utilisation in ageing populations: Demographic and economic perspectives, WU Ph.D. Program in Economic and Social Sciences.

Ph.D. and Doctoral theses supervised

Berger, Michael. Safeguarding sustainability of health care: Problem fields and policy appraisal, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (completed).

Föbleitner, Sophie: Inequalities within the Austrian Health Care System, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (ongoing).

Oberndorfer, Moritz. Unequally unequal? Social cohesion and health in times of rising income inequality, Doctoral Program at the Medical University of Vienna (ongoing).

Renner, Anna-Theresa. Reasons and implications of variations in access and utilization of primary healthcare services, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (completed).

Schneider, Peter. Pharmaceutical Policy for High-priced and innovative medicines, WU Doctoral Program in Social and Economic Sciences (ongoing).

Master's theses supervised

Andrew, Elise Marie. The effect of work-time (reduction) on preventive health behavior patterns, Master's thesis in Socio-Ecological Economics and Policy (completed).

Föbleitner, Sophie: Regional Variation within the Austrian Health Care System, Master's thesis in Economics (completed).

Gruber, Laurenz. Evaluation eines Nudging Experiments in der UK: Der Effekt des Soft Drink Industry Levy, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (ongoing).

Kogler, Marion: Differences in educational systems associated with social inequalities in health behavior, Master's thesis in Socioeconomics (completed).

Stacherl, Barbara. Medical Practice Variation – Explaining Variation in Antibiotic Prescribing across Austrian General Practitioners, Master's thesis in Economics (completed).

Zommer, Patrick: The relationship between changes in social role and cardiovascular disease at advanced age, Master's thesis in Economics (ongoing).

Bachelor's theses supervised

Galuszka Alexander. Factors impacting rates of avoidable hospitalizations in European publicly funded health care systems, Bachelor thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (completed).

Horvart Ema. Are mergers and acquisitions hampering research and development in the pharmaceutical industry: A review of the antibiotic industry, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (ongoing).

Steinmetz, Sebastian. Evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the Austrian SARS-CoV-2 testing strategy, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (ongoing).

Strahl, Maximilian. Economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and of its policy measures in the DACH countries, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (ongoing).

Zourek, Jan Stefan. On the epidemiology of SARS and COVID-19 and the effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical interventions: a literature review, Bachelor's thesis in Business, Economics, and Social Sciences (ongoing).

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 2020, the HEP team conducted the following outreach activities:

WU was awarded the organization of the European Health Economics Association (EUHEA) Conference 2024, in partnership with the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) and Gesundheit Österreich GmbH: <http://www.euhea.eu/>.

Prof. Marcel Bilger is serving as President of the Austrian Health Economics Association (ATHEA) for the 2019-2021 period: <http://www.athea.at/en/about/>.

"Better health through financial incentives?" Marcel Bilger was WU Researcher of the Month July 2020 and communicates his research in a video: <https://www.wu.ac.at/en/research/wu-researchers/rom20/marcel-bilger>.

"Was uns besser altern lässt", Patricia McCallister-Käfer described Daniela Weber's research in Die Presse on November 13th: <https://www.diepresse.com/5897143/was-uns-besser-altern-lasst>.

Der Wissenschaftspreis der AK of Upper Austria went to Dr. Anna-Theresa Renner for her dissertation called „Waiting time, avoidable hospitalisations and patient mobility: The economics of healthcare access“. Dr. Renner communicated her research in a video: https://ooe.arbeiterkammer.at/service/presse/Pflege_im_Fokus_der_Wissenschaft.html.

Prof. Marcel Bilger is serving as „WU-Medienansprechpartner/innen für Fragen zu Wirtschaft und Recht rund um COVID19: Gesundheitssystem unter Druck“.

Dr. Daniela Weber was invited to participate in the two-day WHO Consortium on Metrics and Evidence for Healthy Ageing. The 2020 CMEHA annual meeting provided an opportunity to review what has been done so far and discuss future steps. She was the only Austrian participant in this meeting.

INFOS AND CONTACT

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