

Workshop on Impact Evaluation of Population, Health and Nutrition Programs
Accra, Ghana
July 18-29, 2016

Rationale

Many governments and international organizations have established improving people's health as a key objective of their actions. To that end, they invest large amounts of money and resources in implementing health and nutrition programs. In a context of limited public resources and growing concerns about the performance of public programs, it is important to know whether these programs are having the intended impact they were designed for. Good evaluations play an important role by providing evidence of the impact of program actions on target populations. Does a program have an impact? By how much? Does the program have a different impact on different groups of people? Do different program components have different impacts? Why and how does the program have an impact? At what cost? Is it cost effective? Those are important questions that can be answered by rigorous impact evaluations. In this workshop we will review methods for providing answers to some of those questions. But, how credible is the answer? We will also review the limitations of the methodologies and the conditions under which they provide valid and credible answers.

Objectives

The workshop has been designed to review the main methods for evaluating program impact and to increase your ability to design and conduct impact evaluations of health programs. The main workshop objectives are as follows:

- to understand the basic concepts of program monitoring and evaluation (M&E)
- to define the impact evaluation questions and to examine the main issues to consider for answering those questions in a valid way
- to review the main evaluation designs and estimation techniques used for evaluating program impact
- to develop criteria for choosing the appropriate estimation strategy given different scenarios of program characteristics and data availability
- to interpret results appropriately and to examine their programmatic implications
- to gain practical experience applying the estimation strategies and tools.

Thematic Content

1. Fundamental concepts of comprehensive program evaluation.
2. What information is provided by impact evaluations that other types of evaluation do not?
3. The impact evaluation question. Issues to consider for answering the evaluation question. Approximating the counterfactual, key issues: confounding, selectivity, externalities, contamination, heterogeneous effects
4. Evaluation designs: experimental and non-experimental
5. Experimental designs
6. Selectivity and endogeneity problems: Causes, consequences, and solutions
7. Instrumental variables methods
8. Difference-in-differences designs
9. Matching designs
10. Regression discontinuity analysis
11. Qualitative and mixed approaches for evaluating program impact

12. Cost effectiveness analysis
13. Preparing an impact evaluation proposal

Format

- Lectures
- Practical applications and exercises
- Group work (see guidelines)

Resources and Materials

- Binder with materials
- Lecture notes and handouts of presentations and Stata demonstrations
- Web sites and readings on evaluation (handout)
- Stata 14 (Stata Corp. can provide a free multiple-user time-limited copy of Stata 14 during the duration of the workshop)
- Laptops: each participant should bring his/her own laptop which should have enough capacity to upload Stata 14 and several datasets. Electronic versions of the materials will be provided in pdf or Word formats. Participants' presentations are expected to be in Powerpoint.

Very important: Your questions and active participation in the sessions.

Requirements

The course has a technical content. It is required that participants have knowledge of statistics and empirical analysis at the intermediate level. In particular, it is recommended that participants are familiar with basic statistics, regression analysis (ordinary least squares, logit and probit models), management of household survey data sets, and the use of a statistical software package. Stata 14 will be the statistical software used during the workshop. It is recommended that participants become familiar with the Stata program before attending the workshop (Recommended: UCLA's <http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/> or you can find a list of resources at: <http://www.stata.com/links/resources-for-learning-stata/>)

Group Work

Participants will form four or five groups of about four persons each. Groups will work in the preparation of a proposal for evaluating the impact of a health program. It is recommended that participants bring their own programs to be considered as the program chosen by the group. Guidelines for preparing a proposal will be provided the second day of the workshop. There will be time in the afternoons reserved for group work. Group proposals will be presented the last day of the workshop.

Focus

Even though good part of the workshop will be spent reviewing evaluation designs and the application of statistical techniques for evaluating programs, this is not a course in statistics, this is a course on program impact evaluation. We will start by understanding the key evaluation questions to answer, and then we will examine how the methods can help us to provide answers to the questions. We will also emphasize the rationale and your intuition for the application of the methods. That is the perspective of the workshop.

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