

**Does GP quality affect demand for GPs**Hugh Gravelle¹, Rita V. Santos¹¹ Center for Health Economics, University of York, York, UNITEDKINGDOMContact: rs590@york.ac.uk

Objectivos (Objectives): Few studies have examined patient choice of general practice. In the English National Health Service patients choose a single practice to provide primary care. We examine the factors which affect patients' choice of practice and in particular whether patients respond to differences in quality across practices. If they do then policies to increase competition between practices could be used to improve quality as practices cannot compete via price.

Metodologia (Methodology): We have data for 2006 on the number of patients in each of 36 age/gender groups in each of 32,000 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) who are registered with each of over 8000 GP practices. LSOAs have a mean total population of 1500. To each LSOA we attach information on the socio-economic characteristics of the population, including measures of deprivation and education. We have information on GP practice characteristics including the proportion of female GPs, the proportion of GPs qualified outside the UK, the average age of GPs and number of GPs per patient on the practice list. We measure each practice's clinical quality by its average performance on a set of clinical quality indicators from the Quality Framework Outcome (QOF) database. We also measure average patient satisfaction in each practice using the 2006/07 GP patient satisfaction (GPPS) survey (5.2 million patients). We calculate the straight line distance from the LSOA centroid to each GP practice. The choice set for patients in an LSOA is assumed to be the nearest 30 practices within a 10km radius. A random utility choice model supports the empirical analysis and we use the conditional logit model to examine the effect of patient and practice characteristics on choice of practice. We estimate separate models for each age/gender group. We interact attributed patient characteristics with practice characteristics to test if more deprived patients are more or less sensitive to distance and quality.

Resultados (Results): The number of GP practices used by patients from the same LSOA varies between 1 and 58. 99% choose a practice within a 10 km distance and practices at greater distance are less likely to be chosen. But distance is not the only factor affecting choice as only 21% of patients chooses the nearest practice. While distance and patient satisfaction is more important for patients leaving in deprived areas, the proportion of female GPs and quality is more important for less deprived areas. Patients in 15 to 24 and 25 to 44 age bands are more likely to choose a practice with higher quality.

Conclusões (Conclusions): Demand for GP practice is a function of quality as well as distance. Understanding what are the GP practice characteristics patients value more is fundamental to understand how GP practices may compete in a regulated price market according to their catchment area characteristics and thus how quality may vary with the characteristics of the local populations.