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SHARE, the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, is a research infrastructure for studying the effects of health, social, economic and environmental policies over the life-course of European citizens and beyond. From 2004 until today, 380,000 in-depth interviews with 140,000 people aged 50 or older from 28 European countries and Israel have been conducted. Thus, SHARE is the largest pan-European social science panel study providing internationally comparable longitudinal micro data, which allows insights in the fields of public health and socio-economic living conditions of European individuals, both for scientists and policy makers. SHARE has global impact since it not only covers all EU member countries in a strictly harmonized way but additionally is embedded in a network of sister studies all over the world, from the Americas to Eastern Asia. Considering its focus on people aged 50 and older, international orientation, and thematic coverage, SHARE is perfectly suited to provide data on respondents' health, economic, and living situation all across Europe and Israel before and during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Therefore, the aim of this project is to analyse and evaluate the non-intended consequences of the epidemic control decisions to contain the COVID-19 pandemic in 27 European countries using data from SHARE, and to devise improved health, economic and social policies with a transdisciplinary and international team of SHARE researchers from different European research institutions. To reach these aims, several objectives will be pursued: identify healthcare inequalities before, during and after the pandemic; understand the lockdown effects on health and health behaviours; analyse labour market implications of the lockdown; assess the impacts of pandemic and lockdown on income and wealth inequality; mitigate the effects of epidemic control decisions on social relationships; optimise future epidemic control measures by taking the geographical patterns of the disease and their relationship with social patterns into account; better manage housing and living arrangements choices between independence, co-residence or institutionalisation.

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I. Executive summary

In this deliverable, WP5 uses data from the second SHARE Corona Survey in order to analyse the effect of Covid-19-related government financial support on the financial condition of Europeans aged 50 or above; to identify risk groups for financial hardship during the pandemic within the European 50+ population; to investigate the role of online health information seeking on Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy; and to analyse the employment and labour market activity paths of Europeans aged 50 and over in the context of the government policies, related to workplace closure measures, but also vaccination outcomes.

1. Summary of projects and research aims

The units involved in the Work package 5 have analyzed data on household income, government financial support and indicators of financial distress constructed using data in SHARE collected by telephone during the second wave of COVID-19 (“SHARE CT Survey”) but also during the first wave of COVID-19 and standard, pre-pandemic waves.

The analysis conducted so far focuses on the economic consequences of the pandemic on the severity of financial distress of households with members aged 50 and above. Specific attention has been devoted to the following aspects:

- The role of government financial support received by the households
- The effect of job losses suffered during the pandemic

Understanding the economic consequences of the pandemic is of critical importance to develop effective and sustainable policies and to evaluate the effectiveness of current epidemic governmental responses. The data analysis should inform policies aimed at overcoming financial difficulties and income losses associated to the pandemic.

2. Overview of all finished and/or started papers by all major WP participants

a. Finished

None

b. Started/in progress

1. Title: “Effects of Covid-related economic support on 50+ Europeans”. Authors: Debdeep Chattopadhyay, Francesco Maura, Greta Pesaresi and Guglielmo Weber. Department of Economics and Management – University of Padua, Padua, Italy

2. Title: “Financial hardship during the corona pandemic”. – Authors: Arne Bethmann and Alexander Schumacher, MEA

3. Title: “Online health information seeking and Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy”. Authors: Francesco Principe and Guglielmo Weber. Department of Economics and Management – University of Padua, Padua, Italy

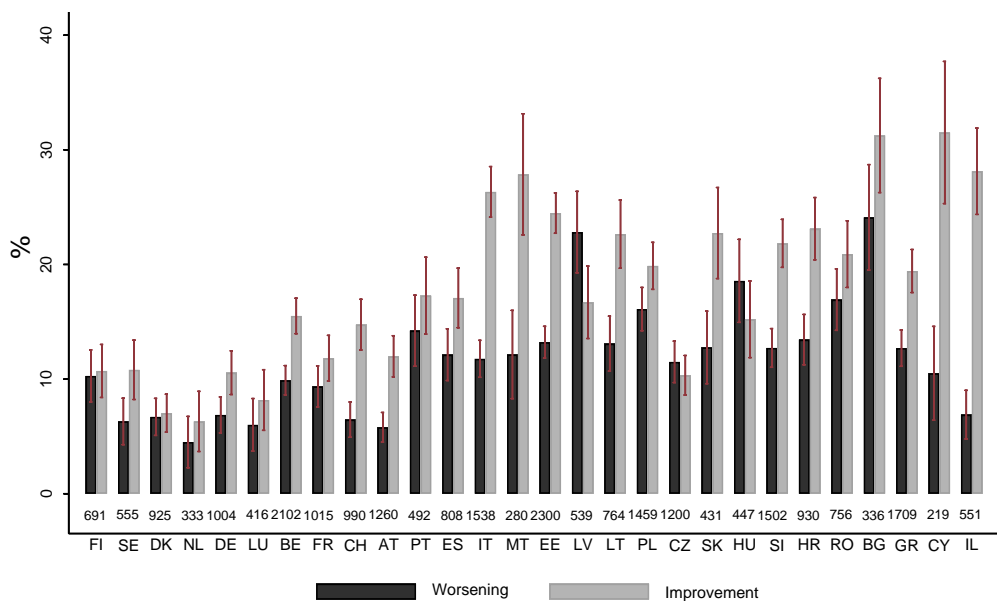
4. Title: “Persistence of work disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic”. Authors: Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak, Dorota Holzer-Żelażewska, Paweł Strzelecki, Michał Taracha, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw, Poland

3. Description of results

1. Title: Effects of Covid-related economic support on 50+ Europeans

Authors: Debdeep Chattopadhyay, Francesco Maura, Greta Pesaresi and Guglielmo Weber, Department of Economics and Management – University of Padua, Padua, Italy

Abstract: We analyse the effect of Covid-19-related government financial support on the financial condition of Europeans aged 50 or above, using data from SHARE (including both Corona Survey waves). We define a composite financial distress indicator and investigate its variation between the first and second wave of the SHARE Corona survey. We find a positive association between increases in financial distress and the receipt of governmental financial support that points to the presence of reverse causality. To identify the causal effect of financial support, we adopt an instrumental variable strategy, whereby the presence of job interruptions reported in the first wave of the SHARE Corona survey predicts governmental financial support reported during the second wave of the survey. We find that job interruptions significantly increase the probability of receiving governmental financial support, and financial support received from the government alleviates households’ financial distress.



Tot obs.: 25,552 HHs

The above figure shows the changes in financial distress between the two waves of the SHARE Corona survey by country. It shows that the financial situation of most part of the population improves in almost every country except for Latvia, Czech Republic, and Hungary. Countries like Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, and Croatia have large percentages of their population experiencing a worsening in FDI. The countries that have large population shares that did not experience a change in FDI include Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, and Luxembourg.

2. Title: Financial hardship during the corona pandemic

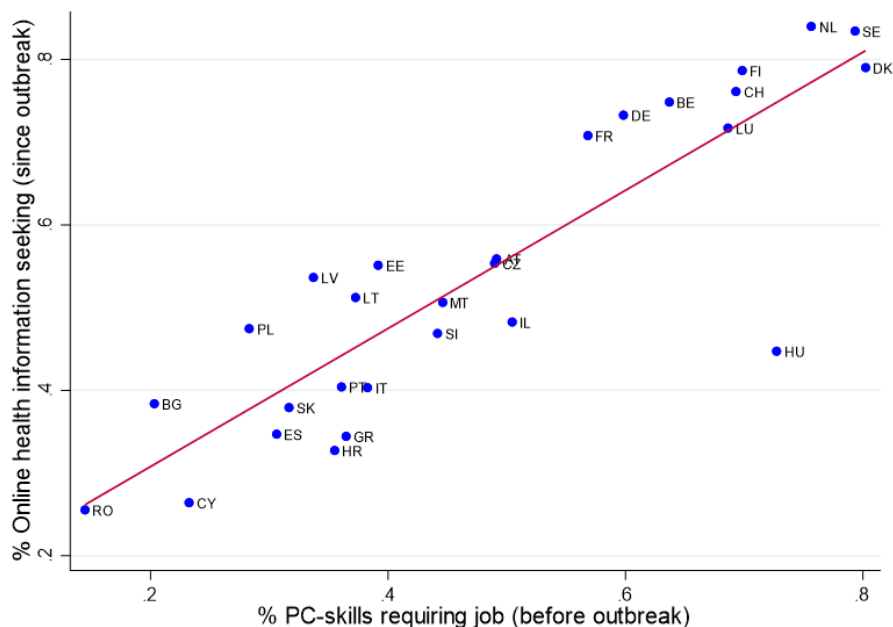
Authors: Arne Bethmann and Alexander Schumacher, MEA

Abstract: The corona pandemic and the subsequent protection measures have had a substantial effect on the economies in the EU member states as well as on Europeans' financial well-being. In our analyses we identify risk groups for financial hardship during the pandemic within the European 50+ population, using the "making ends meet" variables and loss of income. Since we find that the economic downturn predominantly causes financial hardship through reduction or loss of labor income, our descriptive analysis focuses mainly on previously employed respondents. The project will describe the economic situation of households during the pandemic along variables such as countries, previous income, age, education, and household composition. This research could point to where government financial support is needed to alleviate financial hardship, while further analysis could help identify where it has been most effective in doing so.

3. Title: Online health information seeking and Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy

Authors: Francesco Principe and Guglielmo Weber. Department of Economics and Management – University of Padua, Padua, Italy

Abstract: We use recently released SHARE data to investigate the role of online health information seeking on Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy. We adopt an instrumental variable strategy to deal with endogeneity and find that searching for health information has a strong negative effect on vaccine hesitancy. Results also show that individuals whose social networks suffered more during the outbreak, in terms of hospitalisations and deaths, are less likely to be hesitant.



The authors leverage on retrospective information on individual job history and assume that online health information seeking since Covid-19 outbreak depends on observed characteristics as well as pre-outbreak computer skills required at work. The figure provides a graphical representation of this (first-stage) relationship.

4. Title: Persistence of work disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic

Authors: Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak, Dorota Holzer-Żelażewska, Paweł Strzelecki, Michał Taracha, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw, Poland

Abstract: Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the national policy responses were the workplace closures that were either recommended or required for selected groups of workers. These policies led to various types of work disruptions, including working shorter hours, working from home or from different place than the usual work environment, working longer hours, being furloughed or laid-off, or facing the business closure (Alam, 2020; Baker, 2020; Brugiavini et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic forced employers to apply different working practices, including the working from home option. Disruptions of organisational work practices were affected most importantly by the government policies and actions, including the recommendations of workplace closures, but also access and promotion of vaccinations.

In the chapter, we will use the data from the two waves of the SHARE Corona Survey and analyse the employment and labour market activity paths of Europeans aged 50 and over in the context of the government policies, related to workplace closure measures, but also vaccination outcomes.

Our methodological approach is to use the sequence analysis in order to identify employment paths of people 50+ in the SHARE countries and group the respondents according to similarities and/or differences of their employment paths. Further, we will also analyse, which socio-economic characteristics and government activities are associated with different types of employment paths during the COVID-19 pandemic, which will contribute to broadening the understanding of the older workers' labour supply during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dang & Viet Nguyen, 2021; Monahan et al., 2020). In the analysis, we will also take into account country characteristics, such as medium-term economic changes (GDP, employment rate) as well as country development using the Human Development Index (Chłoń-Domińczak & Holzer-Żelażewska, 2021).

The proposed chapter aims to contribute to understanding the interplay of the government policies, employment paths and transitions to inactivity.

4. Future Research aims and next steps

The units involved in the Work package 5 will develop the analysis along the following lines of research:

- Exploring heterogeneities of the effect of government financial support on financial distress (and possibly other outcomes) by different age groups and working status
- Control for the strength and the exact moment of the pandemic by country
- Assess the consequences for income inequality and financial distress of the new ways of working ("working from home") that have been made available to some, but not all, workers in our sample.
- Investigate the differential role of governmental financial support as opposed to support from other (informal) sources among different countries.
- Enriching the descriptive analysis on the factors associated to an increased risk of financial distress, considering not only more detailed employment history information, but also other factors such as education, economic conditions, and mental health before the pandemic.

II. Papers and drafts of Work Package 5 based on the second SHARE Corona Survey

WP5 included all first results based on the second SHARE Corona Survey in *“I. Executive summary”*.

Therefore, no further drafts or manuscripts can be added under *“II. Papers and drafts of Work Package 5 based on the second SHARE Corona Survey”* at this stage of the project.