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Irish Centre for Social Gerontology

Eliciting Preferences for Technology in the Long-Term Care of Older People In Ireland.

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AAATE International Workshop, Milano
September 26th 2008



Overview of Research:

Aim of Research:

The purpose of research is to identify general population preferences for technology in the care of older people in Ireland.

Research is part of TRIL Research Centre.

Key Research Questions:

- What are peoples' preferences for a technology based care model as opposed to a human based care models in the care of older people?
- Which health outcomes / group of technological devices do people prefer – falls prevention, cognitive impairment detection, social connection.
- Are people willing to pay for technology in the care of older people in Ireland? – who will pay?



Methodology:

- Issue a stated preference contingent valuation survey to a random representative sample of the general population.

Contingent valuation explained:

- Contingent valuation surveys can be thought of as attempts to replace missing markets, albeit hypothetically, in an attempt to measure underlying consumer demand and valuation for non-marketed social goods such as health care programmes.
- Respondents are asked to think about the contingency of an actual market existing for a programme and to state the maximum they would be WTP for such a programme.
- Contingent valuation methodology can capture the use and non-use values of a non-market good.



Contingent valuation for technology in care:

- Using contingent valuation to describe long-term community based care programmes, one of which is technology based, from a priority setting approach.
- Establishing societal preferences for health care programmes i.e. how these health care programmes impact societal well being.
- General population survey data allows us to identify the significance of various socio-economic factors (age and income) as well as experience and likelihood of care provision.
- However, the methodology is not without it's critics.



Stages of the Research:

Stage 1: Social audit conducted with 20 people representative of the general population (Age range: 18 – 84).

Stage 2: Pilot survey. N=50

Stage 3: Distribute full survey. Random representative sample N~1000.

Stage 1: Aim of Social Audit:

- Investigate validity of contingent valuation as a methodology for establishing preferences for technology in long term care.
- Investigate known biases associated with contingent valuation to facilitate survey design.
- Explore attitudes and preferences to technology in care.
- Establish preliminary WTP estimates for use in full survey.



Social Audit Methodology:

1. Explored general attitudes to technology long term care of older people.
2. Each participant presented with three surveys:
 - 1. Two human care programmes
 - 2. Three technology programmes
 - 3. Two human care programmes plus one technology programme



Social Audit Results:

- Heterogeneous nature of care of older people was highlighted.
- Companionship highlighted as the most important feature in community based care.
- Benefits of technology in care recognised by all – reflected in WTP.
- Age gradient reflected in preferences for the technology programmes.
- Age gradient also reflected in preferences for family care programmes – younger participants did not feel family should be paid for providing care.
- Younger people more negative about older people's acceptance of technology.
- 'Health service should be more efficient' was the most cited reason highlighting protest bids – strong lack of faith in the HSE.
- Stronger faith in voluntary organisations. This was reflected in a willingness to pay through a voluntary donation.



Implications for use of contingent valuation:

- With sufficient information, people were able to form preferences regarding technology in the care of older people.
- Technology in particular was susceptible to information effects (framing effects)
- Payment vehicle bias evident.
- Warm glow and contribution effects strongly evident.
- Further investigation of consistency of preferences is required.



Future Work:

- Sufficient funding for a random representative contingent valuation survey.
- Split sample method will be used to obtain absolute and relative preferences and WTP for technology in the care of older people.
- Data to be collected by year end.



Thank you