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Revised:

Covid-19 Health Insurance Vignette: Pre-test July 2020 . . . Modification 2020-08-27

(Health Care Opinion Research 1)

Modifications to AEARCTR-0006169 (2020-07-20)

Ottoni-Wilhelm, Mark. 2020. "Health Care Opinion Research 1." AEA RCT Registry. July 20. <https://doi.org/10.1257/rct.6169-1.0>.

The modification below will be approved as IRB 2004540189-A001 (Expedited)
Approval date: Pending.

Modifications

1. In the 2020-08-03 session we did not ask the Principle of Care State adjectives (to reduce the length of the session). Likewise in the next session to be run we will not ask the Principle of Care State adjectives.
2. A new version of a control group that reads nothing before answering the Emotional Response Scale. The new control group reads:

We will begin on the next page by asking you about how you are feeling at the moment.

3. A new version of the "Risk to Self 1" condition (the story about how easily the coronavirus spreads through the air) to remove the picture of the sneeze and its caption.
4. A new version of the "Risk to Self 2" condition (the story about the lung transplant) to reduce its empathic impact and raise its sense of the risk-to-self from people going uninsured. The new vignette can be read in the uploaded Qualtrics survey:

"HealthcareOpinionResearch01b-Protocol-2020-08-27.pdf"

5. The manipulation check question was revised to accommodate the new version of a control group.
6. An open-ended question about feelings was added at the end of the session:

In the beginning of the study we asked you how much you were experiencing 18 different “emotion adjectives” intended to let us know how you were feeling at that moment. In your own words, please describe how you were feeling at that moment.

7. Number of participants: $N \approx 405$; about 135 each in the new version of control and the new version of “Risk to Self 1”.

Explanation

The preliminary report of results from the first (2020-08-03) session is in Royalty et al. (2020). Three of those results led to the modification just described from session 2.

1. The levels of Distress/Negative State were much higher than in a similar experiment conducted in February 2020, before the US was gripped by the pandemic. We wanted to investigate if DS/NS was still high in a control group that was in no way reminded about COVID-19.
2. The “Risk to Self 1” condition with a picture of a sneeze produced unanticipated results: it lowered empathy and did not raise DS/NS. We conjecture that the sneeze picture had evoked another emotion (perhaps disgust), so we wanted to investigate the response to the vignette without the accompanying picture of the sneeze.

Because we conjecture that perhaps the sneeze vignette evoked another emotion that we were not directly measuring, we included an open-ended question about feeling. This question is at the very end of the session.

3. The “Risk to Self 2” condition increased DS/NS, but only with marginal statistical significance. There also was some evidence, albeit not strong evidence, that “Risk to Self 2” may be raising empathy. Therefore we wanted to investigate whether a redesigned vignette about a lung transplant would more strongly increase DS/NS without simultaneously increasing empathy.
4. We increased the number of participants in the new control, new sneeze, and new lung conditions to 135 each. The reason: in the 2020-08-03 Session the 88 percent who correctly answered the attention check question was lower than in a similar study conducted in February 2020 (96 percent). Also, (only) 62 percent correctly identified the condition they had been assigned; in this case this is much lower than in February 2020 (90 percent). This led us to believe that a substantial fraction of the MTurk participants in August 2020 did not take their participation in the experiment seriously.

We are planning for a similar level of lack of seriousness in Session 2. Accordingly we will drop participants who answer either attention check or condition check question incorrectly. Therefore we are recruiting more participants than our target

number of participants who pass both the attention/condition questions (which is 105 per condition).