

# Summary

This PhD thesis addresses empirical issues pertaining to the field of health economics and law and economics. It consists of an introduction and three self-contained papers.

## *Paper 1: Determinants of Self-Reported Mental Health Using the British Household Panel Survey*

This paper examines the determinants of self-reported mental health in UK using data from the eight waves of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). In particular, we are interested in assessing the effect of education on self-reported mental health scores that other studies have ignored. Empirical evidence presented here confirms that mental health scores mentioned on the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) are significantly related to job status, age, marital status and self-assessed health. The results also show no evidence that income impacts on self-reported mental health. Ethnicity is also found to deteriorate self-reported mental health yet the effect is not significant. The results of this paper also show that education had no significant impact on self-reported mental health.

## *Paper 2: Suicide, Unemployment, and Income Inequality: A Panel Data of 15 European Countries*

Most panel data studies have employed overall suicide rates (male and female) to identify the determinants of suicide. This research has also neglected the use of country specific linear time trends. Neglecting these factors may confound the empirical estimates of socio-economic variables due to the impact of unobserved country specific determinants of suicide that are time-varying. Empirical results from fifteen European countries between 1970 and 1998 support this hypothesis. Specifically, economic growth, fertility rate, and alcohol consumption seem to have a significant impact on male and female suicide rates after the inclusion of country specific linear trends. Contrary to prior studies, suicide rates were not sensitive to income levels, female labour participation rates, and unemployment. In addition, the effect of divorce rate is specific to gender. Finally, our results also illustrate the importance of employing age specific suicide rates compared to what has been traditionally used, in trying to evaluate the factors responsible for suicide mortality. In particular, the impact of socio-economic factors is not equal across age groups, and policies aimed at the prevention of suicide should take this into account.

***Paper 3: The Relationship between Copyright Software Protection and Piracy: Evidence from Europe***

While addressing the main econometric and methodological shortcomings of the previous cross-country analysis, this paper extends to assess empirically the relationship between software protection and national piracy rates across 23 European countries and over a period of three years (1994, 1997, and 2000). For that purpose, a new index of copyright software protection is constructed. Results based on panel data technique show that copyright software protection and income are the most determinant factors of software piracy. Moreover, the model predicts an inverted U relationship between piracy and per capita income. Additionally, the above findings are robust to the inclusion of other descriptors suggested by the empirical literature of piracy.

**Keywords**

Self-Reported mental health, Longitudinal data, Instrumental variables, Unobserved effects, Suicide, Panel data, Income inequality, Unemployment, Piracy, Copyright software protection, Intellectual property rights