

# Opponent's Report on Dissertation Thesis

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Author:	<b>Jana Votápková</b>
Advisor:	Doc. PhDr. Martin Gregor Ph.D.
Title of the Thesis:	Essays on health economics and health policy
Type of Defense:	<b>DEFENSE</b>
Date of Pre-Defense	October 3, 2019
Opponent:	Olena Stavrunova Ph.D.

Address the following questions in your report, please:

- a) Can you recognize an original contribution of the author?

Jana Votapkova wrote a thesis consisting of three chapters each focused on a different area of Czech Republic health care sector. The first chapter analyses efficiency of hospitals in the Czech Republic during the period 2006 and 2010. The analysis relies on a cutting-edge methodology for efficiency frontier analysis. A comprehensive dataset on a variety of hospital inputs and outputs was employed in the analysis. The results suggest that on average Czech hospitals are quite efficient with the average score of at least 0.92, but there is a substantial heterogeneity in efficiency across the hospitals, ranging from 0.408 to 1.32 in some specifications. Impacts of several hospital characteristics on efficiency have been explored. Among the interesting findings is that being a non-profit or a teaching hospital reduces efficiency. I think this is the first study of hospital efficiency in Czech Republic, and is a contribution to the growing international literature on this topic. The findings have important policy applications. The paper is already published in a high quality journal (the Journal of Productivity Analysis) which is a testament of the high quality of execution of this chapter.

The second chapter analyses the effect of inpatient user charges on inpatient care. In January 2008 Czech Republic introduced user charges for health care use, whereby for a large number of medical services (inpatient, outpatient care, etc.) patients were now charged small co-payments. But after one year Czech regions under the control of Social Democratic Party started to reimburse user charges to patients in hospitals located on their territory. The

thesis analyses the effect of these reimbursements on days of hospital care using the Difference in Differences methodology. The results suggest that the effect of reimbursements on hospital use was small quantitatively and is marginally statistically significant. I think this is a good contribution to the big literature on price elasticity of the demand for health care, and certainly is a very valuable input into the debate about financing of health care system in Czech Republic.

The last chapter looks at the relationship between savings and health of senior individuals in Czech Republic. The analysis uses Czech cross section from the SHARE database and employs the IV methodology to solve the problem of endogeneity between savings and health, i.e. the bidirectional causal relationship between the two. Understanding the relationships between wealth and health of individuals close to retirement is a very important topic in the environment where ageing population raises concerns about sustainability of health care and social security systems. The chapter finds that bad health decrease savings of Czech pre-retirees. In my opinion the chapter delivers a high quality thorough empirical analysis of an important research question.

b) Is the thesis based on relevant references?

Yes, the list of references is complete and all relevant contributions are mentioned in the thesis

c) Is the thesis defensible at your home institution or another respected institution where you gave lectures?

Yes, this thesis would be defensible in the University of Technology Sydney

d) Do the results of the thesis allow their publication in a respected economic journal?

Chapter 1 has already been published in a high quality journal, and chapters 2 and 3 also have a potential to be published in good quality health economics journals.

e) Are there any additional major comments on what should be improved?

My earlier comments were sufficiently addressed in the thesis and I do not have any further comments.

f) What is your overall assessment of the thesis? (a) I recommend the thesis for defense without substantial changes, (b) the thesis can be defended after revision indicated in my comments, (c) not-defensible in this form.

**I recommend the thesis for defense without substantial changes.**

*(Note: The report should be at least 2 pages long.)*

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Date:	
Opponent's Signature:	
Opponent's Affiliation:	Olena Stavrunova Ph.D. University of Technology Sydney