



Policy Window Advanced: summaries of completed evaluations

Evaluation of the Healthcare Reform

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Overview of the evaluation

In 2009, the Colombian healthcare reform combined the subsidy and contributory healthcare schemes and expanded benefits under the new unified system. At the time, around forty million citizens were availing of these schemes. The Colombian government contracted a local research consortium to evaluate this intervention. The evaluation included an assessment of changes in the utilization of services, health-seeking behavior of patients, organizational changes and patients' perceptions of the reform. Given the phased roll out of the implementation, the impact evaluation used a difference-in-difference and a propensity score match approach for a longitudinal database from 2009 to 2012, as well as national representative surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Role of the impact evaluation advisor

The expert advisor reviewed and assessed four shortlisted proposals submitted by organizations interested in conducting the impact evaluation. After the organization was finalized, the advisor assisted the local evaluation team in selecting an appropriate identification strategy, cleaning and managing the datasets, producing the descriptive analysis and planning for evaluation activities. His advice on the suitability of alternative evaluation approaches to estimate the program effects was particularly important, as it helped clearly distinguish the effect of unifying healthcare schemes from the effect of expanding healthcare benefits.

At the implementation stage, the advisor reviewed the preliminary findings, proposed required modifications and defined robustness checks for the evaluation results. The advisor also helped prepare a preliminary presentation on results and worked on a policy brief. The expert played an important role in the monitoring of activities to ensure that they were completed within the timeframe. At the closing stage, he reviewed the final analysis, contributed to preparing a presentation on results to the government and helped identify policy implications of those results. He also assisted the local team in the planning activities required to complete the final report.

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Interactions with the local team

The advisor worked with the local evaluation team from the start of the project. The work included three field trips to Colombia, regular telephone calls and online meetings. His interaction with the local evaluation team was fluid and the communication frequent and dynamic. This relationship enabled a productive collaboration and he was able to provide the technical assistance required effectively. The local team valued the insights he provided. The advisor hopes to co-author a journal article with the local team around this evaluation research.