

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Dept of Information Systems, Business Statistics and Operations Management
Zoom Webinar Announcement



Nudging Patient Choice by Messaging
by
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Date : **16 December 2021 (Thursday)**
Time : **10:00 - 11:15 AM**
Zoom ID : **940 1790 0792 (passcode 350615)**



Abstract: Patient no-shows for scheduled medical appointments are of great concern for many health care providers. In this paper, we tackle the no-show problem by applying insights from behavioral science. Specifically, we "nudge" patients into arriving for their scheduled appointment using text reminders of their upcoming visit. We conduct a field experiment at an outpatient specialty clinic where we add to the standard message, an additional line of text that indicates a potentially long wait for the next available appointment (we call this intervention "waits framing"). Based on a difference-in-differences estimation strategy, we find that waits framing messaging significantly reduced no-shows by a factor of 28.6%. In addition, we find that patients with greater sensitivity to wait, such as those with urgent conditions and those willing to select unpopular slots, are more responsive to the nudge. Through a laboratory experiment, we uncover the mechanism that underlies the nudge---waits framing serves to trigger loss-aversion pertaining to the individual's position in the queue, thereby increasing the perceived cost of missing an appointment. Through the combination of field and designed lab studies, we provide both external and internal validity to the effects of waits framing, and identify the underlying mechanism and heterogeneity in response. Our results have significant implications for clinical operations. At the study site, the resulting improvement in capacity utilization and patient throughput led to a 5.2% increase in clinic revenue. Our findings contribute to the literature on behavioral queuing by showing that through appropriately framed messages, queue operators can tap into the behavioral biases of individuals in order to engender a desired queuing response such as a reduction in queue abandonment.

Biography: Jiayi Liu is a PhD candidate in Information System and Operations Management at Emory University Goizueta Business School. Her research interest is in the area of empirical healthcare operations. At the micro level, her research examines patient and physician behavior in various settings of health care delivery. In particular, she applies insights from behavioral economics to design field interventions that can steer individuals toward farsighted decision making. At the macro level, her research investigates when and why some well-intentioned policies may produce unintended consequences, and under what circumstances can policymakers prevent these unintended consequences. Her current research on policy making is related to drug abuse and kidney transplantation. Before joining Emory, she obtained her Master's in Finance from University of Science and Technology of China.

All interested are welcome!
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