

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Student:	Bc. Martina Lušková
Advisor:	doc. PhDr. Zuzana Havránková, Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	The Effect of Face Masks on Covid Transmission: A Meta-Analysis

OVERALL ASSESSMENT (provided in English, Czech, or Slovak):

Short summary

This is an excellent master's thesis that could, after revisions, be published in a solid international journal. I stress that the thesis is not a mechanical application of current techniques available for meta-analysis in economics: the topic is medical research, which involved many problems (for example, with the summary statistics used, the assumption of meta-analysis techniques, etc), and created a need for original solutions. I have no critical comments, because the author has carefully consulted with me in every stage of her work on the thesis. So all of my comments are already implemented in the thesis.

Contribution

The topic is obvious importance, and several meta-analyses has been done on the topic. But the previous meta-analyses were conducted by medical researchers, who are not aware of the new meta-analysis approaches recently developed in economics. The resulting paper present a marriage of different approaches, and is substantially more credible than previous meta-analyses on the topic.

Methods

The thesis uses up-to-date techniques, such as the recently developed endogenous kink model, stem-based method, and the selection model due to Andrews and Kasy (for which Isaiah Andrews got his John Bates Clark medal). But due to the nature of the data, as I have noted, some common meta-analysis assumptions do not hold, such as the independence assumption (estimates and standard errors are independent in the absence of publication bias). For this reason the author uses the new MAIVE technique that we developed this year with Pedro Bom and Heiko Rachinger, and also the p-uniform* technique recently developed in psychology. I also appreciate the use of Bayesian model averaging with a dilution prior that addresses collinearity (a significant problem in this dataset).

Literature

All relevant papers are cited.

Manuscript form

The paper is written in good English and nicely typeset in LaTeX.

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Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a master's thesis at the IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade A. The results of the Urkund analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
Contribution (max. 30 points)	29
Methods (max. 30 points)	30
Literature (max. 20 points)	20
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	18
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	97
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	A

NAME OF THE REFEREE: doc. PhDr. Zuzana Havránková, Ph.D.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 29.5.2023

Digitally signed, Zuzana Havránková

Referee Signature

EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:

CONTRIBUTION: *The author presents original ideas on the topic demonstrating critical thinking and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and empirics. There is a distinct value added of the thesis.*

METHODS: *The tools used are relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the author's level of studies. The thesis topic is comprehensively analyzed.*

LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

MANUSCRIPT FORM: *The thesis is well structured. The student uses appropriate language and style, including academic format for graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables and disposes with a complete bibliography.*

Overall grading:

TOTAL	GRADE
91 – 100	A
81 - 90	B
71 - 80	C
61 – 70	D
51 – 60	E
0 – 50	F