

Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management (ESHPM) and China Scholarship Council offer the position of

PhD student Time preferences in health (1.0 fte)*

The organisation

Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management (ESHPM) of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) is leading in the Netherlands with its educational and research activities targeted at policy and management issues in health care. The school offers a bachelor programme, two master programmes, a research master programme, and post-academic educational programmes and courses.

At ESHPM, research and educational activities are closely intertwined. Knowledge and experiences of various scientific disciplines such as economics, law, social-medical sciences, organisational science and public administration are brought together and applied to the health care sector. This multidisciplinary approach to education and research is unique.

ESHPM is located in the Bayle Building at campus Woudestein of Erasmus University Rotterdam and has strong ties to the Erasmus School of Economics. Currently, approximately 950 students are engaged in one of our programmes and 150 people are employed at ESHPM. Internationalisation is highly valued at ESHPM. The number of students, teachers and researchers from abroad has risen significantly over the past years and have enriched our programmes.

Description of the project and position

Many daily decisions require an intertemporal trade-off between earlier and later consequences. These vary from savings for pensions, to learning for exams, to more exercise now to reduce the chance of becoming obese later. In these decisions, agents' discount rates play an important role. Economic theory predicts that the more agents discount the future, the less they will engage in future-oriented behaviour, such as saving. During the last few decades it has become clear that besides the discount rate, the amount of time-inconsistency is also highly relevant for many decisions. For example, heterogeneity in time-inconsistency may explain why agents with the same absolute discount rate differ in their tendency to postpone an annoying task.

Because of their differential impact on intertemporal choices, it is crucial to disentangle time inconsistency and discount rates in empirical studies. Furthermore, these two factors may both be confused with utility curvature, which also affects most elicitation of discounting parameters. Recently, the supervisors (Dr. Arthur Attema, Prof.dr. Kirsten Rohde and Prof.dr. Werner Brouwer) have developed and tested new methods to measure time preferences for both monetary and health outcomes. These methods measure to what extent people discount the future, while controlling for the distorting effect of utility curvature. This is pioneering work, still at its early stages. In the current project, the candidate will develop this methodology further. This includes both the creation of theoretical models, and the design and administration of new experiments. Of particular interest are the study of time-inconsistency (present bias), differences in time preferences for gains and losses, the relation of time preferences to healthy behaviour and health state valuations, and the role of time discounting in health economic evaluations. In addition, the candidate may consider the related topics of decision under risk, decision under ambiguity, and societal preferences for health.

Requirements

This PhD position is financed by the China Scholarship Council of the Chinese government and only Chinese citizens can apply. The successful applicant for this position is expected to have a recent or almost completed Master's degree in (health/behavioural) economics or econometrics. The ideal candidate has a strong motivation for doing methodological research in the field of health economics, has advanced mathematical skills and sufficient economic and psychological intuition. This will enable the candidate to build a bridge between theoretical work and applied work in clever experiments. Computer skills should include EViews, STATA, R, SPSS or similar statistical software. Knowledge of programming languages is a plus. Applicants must have excellent communication and writing skills in English: an IELTS score of 7.0 (minimal sub-score of 6.0 for Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) or a TOEFL score of 100 is compulsory (minimal sub-score of 20 each for Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing).

Appointment and salary

We offer a position as PhD student at EUR. The PhD student is appointed for a period of 4 years. Preferred starting date of PhD appointment is **September 1st, 2019**. Remuneration will be in accordance with the CSC guidelines. The CSC-scholarship also covers health insurance, international airfare and living expenses. The stipend is 1200 euros for 48 months. For more information, see <https://www.eur.nl/en/prospective-csc-phd-candidates>. There are generous opportunities for additional education.

Applications and more information

For more information about this position, contact dr. Arthur Attema (attema@eshpm.eur.nl; +31-10-4089129). Qualified applicants should send a letter of motivation, curriculum vitae, diploma and the names and contact details of two references by email to dr. Arthur Attema and to Ms. Selano Li: uuccchinaoffice@eur.nl. The Erasmus University China Center (EUCC) will first assess and submit the following documents to the Admission Office: your Bachelor-Master degree (in relevant subject area and to be accredited by Nuffic), your Master degree score list (all documents should be in English and by an official authorized institute), and a sufficient TOEFL or IELTS score (see above). If you satisfy these requirements, you will enter the recruitment phase. The deadline for application is March 10th, 2019.

*Acquisition based upon this vacancy is not appreciated.