

# Reporting Heterogeneity in Self-Assessed Health among Elderly Europeans: The Impact of Mental and Physical Health Status

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## Abstract

Self-assessed health (SAH) is a frequently used measure of individuals' health status. It is also prone to reporting heterogeneity. To control for reporting heterogeneity valid measures of the objective health status are needed. The topic becomes even more complex for cross-country comparisons, as many key variables tend to vary strongly across countries, influenced by cultural and institutional differences. This study aims at exploring the key drivers for reporting heterogeneity in SAH in an international context. To this end, country specific effects are accounted for and the objective health measure is concretised, separating out effects of mental and physical health conditions. We use panel data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) which provides a rich dataset on the elderly European population. To obtain distinct indicators for physical and mental health conditions two indices were constructed. Finally, to identify potential reporting heterogeneity in SAH a generalised ordered probit model is estimated. We find evidence that health behaviour as well as health care utilisation, mental and physical health condition as well as country characteristics affect reporting behaviour. We conclude that observed and unobserved heterogeneity play an important role when analysing SAH and have to be taken into account.

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