

Pre-analysis plan

Effective use of SMS: improving government confirmation processes

Title:	Effective use of SMS: improving government confirmation processes
Country:	Australia
Additional key words:	Government, communication, SMS, administration
JEL Code(s):	M – Business administration and business economics
Abstract:	<p>If a parent/s feels that their Child Support Assessment (an assessment to determine the amount of child support to be paid / received) has not taken into account a special circumstance, they can apply for a Change of Assessment (CoA). This is done by lodging a form with the Australian Government Department of Human Services' (Human Services) Child Support team.</p> <p>BETA will work with the Human Services' Behavioural Insights Team and Child Support team to test the efficacy of SMS communication aimed at reducing inbound calls relating to checking on the progress of the Change of Assessment form.</p> <p>This project will tap into the concept of increasing information between clients and service providers.</p>
Trial Start date:	Thursday, 02 March 2017
Intervention Start date:	Thursday, 02 March 2017
Trial End Date:	<p>Thursday 13 April 2017 – end of active intervention period</p> <p>Data will be collected until all assessment forms are allocated to a decision-maker. This may be 30 June 2017.</p>
Outcome:	<p>Primary: Number of telephone calls to Child Support area</p> <p>Secondary: Time between form lodgement and telephone call to Child Support area regarding Change of Assessment form</p>

Intervention:	Informational SMS regarding Change of Assessment process for parents who have lodged a Change of Assessment form		
Experimental Design):	<p>2-arm Randomised Controlled Trial.</p> <p>Approximately 2,400 parents are expected to lodge a Change of Assessment form during a 6-week period, and all will be part of this trial. Parents will be randomised into either intervention or control condition.</p> <p>Data (number of telephone calls to Child Support area) will be collected daily until all parents in the trial have been allocated to a decision-maker.</p>		
Randomisation Method:	Simple randomisation using the final digit of a randomly allocated client number		
Randomisation Unit:	Individual		
Planned Number of Clusters:	2,400		
Planned Number of Observations:	2,400		
Sample size (or number of clusters) by treatment arms:	Approximately 1,200 individual participants anticipated in treatment and control conditions		
Power calculation- Minimum Detectable Effect Size for Main Outcomes:	A two proportion power calculation gives a sample size of 1222 per group at 80% power and a significance level of 0.05, expecting a 5% change in the primary outcome.		
Outcome Tables:	Outcome	Experimental condition	
		Intervention	Control
	Overall number of telephone calls to Child Support Agency	# of calls from treatment group	# of calls from control group

	Outcome	Experimental condition	
		Intervention	Control
	Time from lodgement of form until call to Child Support Agency	Average time in days from lodgement to first call for treatment group	Average time in days from lodgement to first call for control group