Title: **Investigating survey mode effects in discrete choice experiment responses**

**HESG submission**

**Aims**

Surveys of patient or public preferences are used in health economics research. While in-person interviews are recommended for preference elicitation research they are expensive. To reduce costs, researchers have used mail surveys sent to a random sample of the general population. Recently, health economists have turned to the internet to collect survey data. Internet surveys have several advantages over ‘traditional’ survey modes: lower data collection costs; increased data collection speed; removal of data entry errors; and minimisation of interviewer bias. However, the survey mode will affect who responds, how respondents answer the questions and respondent’s ability to respond accurately. The aim of the study is to investigate the effect of survey mode on responses to a discrete choice experiment (DCE) questionnaire asking the general population about their preferences for health care. Here we will report the results of the pilot study.

**Methods and data**

We compare four survey modes: internet panel survey (two panel providers), mail survey, mail invitation to complete an internet survey, and in-person interviews. The surveys use a DCE to elicit the general population’s preferences for a health care good; managing a minor illness in community pharmacies. An identical DCE questionnaire is used across the four survey modes and data collection for each mode takes place at the same time. For each mode, the pilot aimed to recruit 150 respondents. We compare the data quality (sample representativeness, response rate, response validity), and test if the elicited preferences are significantly different across modes. The paper compares sample representativeness using a broad set of variables including respondents’ socioeconomic characteristics, health status, behaviour, and attitudes toward health care

**Findings**

638 completed questionnaires were returned. The response rate varied across modes from 1% for the mail invitation to an online survey to 30% for the CAPI. There were significant differences across the sample characteristics. Online respondents were younger and had higher income. Postal respondents were more likely to be retired and CAPI respondents had lower educational qualifications. WTP varied significantly across modes. Preliminary analysis indicates that respondents engagement (and model variance) differs across modes.