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A SIMULTANEOUS EQUATIONS APPROACH**

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De conformidad con la base quinta de la convocatoria del Programa de Estímulo a la Investigación, este trabajo ha sido sometido a evaluación externa anónima de especialistas cualificados a fin de contrastar su nivel técnico.

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Abstract

Empirical research on the relationship between illicit drug use and labour market success has been found to have mixed results in the literature. Relevant sources of variability are the methods used to account for the potential endogeneity of drug use. Using clinical data of drug users, this paper utilizes a recursive simultaneous-equations approach as an alternative for estimating the effect of consumption on labour participation and control the endogeneity problem. Our results confirm that drug use is endogenously determined, and provides evidence to support that frequent use of dependency drugs greatly decreases the likelihood of be in work. The results derive here show the potentially labour market-related costs of drug use and abuse, mainly in terms of production loss.

Key words: drug use, labour participation, endogeneity, simultaneous equation model.

JEL Classification: C31, I12, J23.

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1. Introduction

Substance use and abuse is related to health and social problems which imply economic costs to the individual and the society. In this sense, illicit drug use generates direct costs (health care costs; research, prevention and training programmes; property losses; law enforcement...) and indirect costs represented by losses in productivity. A study carried out by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (2001) revealed that productivity losses accounted for 69% of the total estimated costs of substance use in 2000. Oliva and Rivera (2006) estimated the social cost of illicit drug use in the Autonomous Region of Galicia (Spain) in about €129 million in 2003. The largest single component of these costs is productivity loss, which accounts for 67% of total costs.

The objective of our empirical estimation is to study the relationship between drug use and employment status. Several literature suggest that illicit drug use can affect productivity and labour market position of individuals in a negative way (French *et al.*, 2001; Buchmueller and Zuvekas, 1998; MacDonald and Pudney, 2000; DeSimone, 2002; Alexandre and French, 2004; Van Ours, 2006), however, some empirical research reported no significant effects or positive effects of illicit drug use on wages and labour market success (Gill and Michaels, 1992; Register and Williams, 1992; Kaestner, 1991, 1994).

We should be cautious when comparing results between studies. These inconsistent trends in the literature may be attributed, among other factors, to the specification of labour market outcomes, the frequency measures, the sample of substance users considered in the analysis, the type of substances, and the methods used to address for the endogeneity of drug use. The potential endogeneity may come from a direct effect of income on drug consumption and from the ways, not observed by the econometrician, that individuals are related to labour market success (Buchmueller and Zuvekas, 1998).

Our analysis contributes to a broader understanding of the relationship between illicit drug use and labour market participation differing from previous studies in two important aspects: the use of a clinical record data (previous studies have

used information from national surveys of individuals or households) and the use of a recursive bivariate probit framework as an alternative approach to control for the endogeneity of drug use.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we developed the econometric framework. The sample and the variables are described in section 3. The main results of the empirical analysis are presented in section 4. Section 5 concludes.

2. Econometric specification

A relevant source of variability, in the results described in the introduction is the methods used in the existing literature to account for the potential endogeneity of drug use (DeSimone, 2002; Norton and Han, 2007).

Instrumental variables methods (*IV*), usually implemented in a two-step procedure, are quite common in the literature to correct for endogeneity (DeSimone, 2002; French *et al.*, 2001; Norton *et al.*, 1998; Register and Williams, 1992), however these procedures require the existence of one or more valid instruments that do not directly explain the binary dependent variable but are correlate with the endogenous regressor. In the presence of a weak correlation between the instrument and the endogenous regressor, *IV* estimates can be seriously biased - finding instruments problem- (Alexandre and French, 2004; Norton *et al.*, 1998; Davidson and MacKinnon, 1993). Even with a plausible instrument, the dummy endogenous-variables model seems to raise some econometric problems when the endogenous regressor and the outcome of interest are binary variables (Angrist, 1999; Foster, 1997; Terza *et al.*, 2008). Summarizing, implement a *IV* procedure in nonlinear regression models can lead to bias in the estimation of the effect of drug use on employment status.

Since both drug use and being employed are dichotomous, simultaneous bivariate probit model (*BPM*) is suggest an appropriate alternative model specification in order to control potential endogeneity. We propose a specific case of the *BPM* denoted as a recursive model of simultaneous equations,

since the second binary dependent variable appears on the right-hand side of the first equation (Maddala, 1983; Hardin, 1996; Greene, 1998, 2003). Interestingly, the endogenous nature of the variable can be ignored in formulating the likelihood function (Greene, 2003). Bivariate probit model is estimated using *Full Information Maximum Likelihood* (FIML) method.

Participation in the labour force is modelled via the latent equation:

$$L^* = \beta_1 x' + \beta_2 F + \varepsilon_1, \quad (1)$$

where the latent variable L^* is mapped to the observable binary indicator variable L :

$$\left| \begin{array}{llll} L=1 & \text{if} & L^* > 0 & \text{in labour force.} \\ L=0 & \text{if} & L^* \leq 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{array} \right.$$

In eq. (1) x' is a vector of exogenous variables and F is modelled as a binary variable taking the value of unit if the individual is a frequent user.

Drug use is assumed endogenous in eq. (1) and is determined by the following equation:

$$F^* = \delta_1 z' + \varepsilon_2, \quad (2)$$

where F^* is the latent variable for frequent user, and z' is a vector of exogenous influences on frequency pattern. The unobserved latent variable F^* is related to observable F via

$$\left| \begin{array}{llll} F=1 & \text{if} & F^* > 0 & \text{frequent drug use.} \\ F=0 & \text{if} & F^* \leq 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{array} \right.$$

It is assumed that error terms ε_1 and ε_2 are jointly normally distribute with $E[\varepsilon_1|x', z'] = E[\varepsilon_2|x', z'] = 0$, $var[\varepsilon_1|x', z'] = E[\varepsilon_2|x', z'] = 1$ and $cov[\varepsilon_1, \varepsilon_2|x', z'] = \rho$.

The correlation coefficient ρ measures the correlation between the omitted factors in the employment and the frequency equations. If $\rho=0$, the model collapses to two separate probit models for L and F . On the other hand, when ε_1 and ε_2 are not independent, a recursive bivariate probit framework will yield consistent estimates (the separate estimates would be biased if $\rho \neq 0$). The Wald test is used to determine whether ρ is significantly different from zero (the null hypothesis is that $\rho=0$).

Finally, we are also interested in measuring the influence of frequent use on the probability of labour force participation. This effect can be estimated as a difference between the predict conditional probabilities of labour force participation with and without a frequent drug use (Greene, 2003):

$$E(F)=Prob(L=1|F=1; x, z) - Prob(L=1|F=0; x, z).$$

3. Data and variables

The difficulties associated with survey data are widely recognised, particularly when the subject matter is sensitive (MacDonald and Pudney, 2000). We use unit record data carried out in 2008 by Galician Drug Observatory through a multicenter evaluation system that register, in a standardized manner, homogeneous data from the Drug Addiction Assistance Units (*DAUs*) of Galician Regional Health Service (Spain).

DAUs are configured as the gateway to the public healthcare services related to drug abuse, and the origin of subsequent referrals to other specialized treatment services. Data capture is performed by *DAUs* health staff by face to face interviews at the time that the individual is admitted to treatment for abuse or dependence on a particular type of psychoactive substance. Database is highly representative and reliable, and recorded variables, defined under a clinical procedure, for more than 11,000 individuals admitted in 2008 to receive treatment for illicit drug use, alcohol and tobacco consumption, compulsive gambling, eating disorders and doping in sport. Admission in a *DAU* is

performed on the basis of individual demand, a demand from the individual's closest social environment (family and friends) or by judicial decision.

The main purpose of the information contained in the database is to obtain, by the public health services, care evaluation indicators and planning actions related to drug use rehabilitation, prevention and social reintegration of drug users.

The negative consequences of illicit drugs for worker productivity vary according to physical and psychological effects of each type of substance. We follow drug classification proposed by Ramsay and Spiller (1997) and MacDonald and Pudney (2000), and restricted the study to individuals whose main consumption is illegal substances included in the group of so-called 'dependency drugs' (cocaine, heroin and cocaine+heroin, coded as "primary substance consumed"). This group of drugs can seriously harm the health of the user and presumed negative effect on labour productivity compared to cannabis drugs use, which cause fewer health problems (DeSimone, 2002; Van Ours, 2006). In this analysis, specific models for cannabis users were not estimated because in the sample, consumption of cannabis shows to be secondary to the use of 'dependency drugs' (not mutually exclusive substances) and when we account for intensity of use it is difficult to distinguish among the effects of this type of substance (Buchmueller and Zuvekas, 1998).

The dataset contains detailed information on each individual's labour market activity, substance consumed, consumption patterns (frequency of drug use, route of administration, dynamics of consumption, etc.), prior treatments, criminal record, as standard socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. In the sample approximately 15% of drug users are women admitted to treatment. Following Buchmueller and Zuvekas (1998), DeSimone (2002) and Zuvekas *et al.* (2005) studies, we limited the sample to men because they tend to have greater rates of drug use compared to women (Kessler *et al.*, 1994; Regier *et al.*, 1993). The other reason is that men are more likely to participate in the labour market. After deleting observations with missing values on specific variables, the sample selected for the present analysis includes 4,057 patients.

Impact on labour participation depends of drug use intensity and questions concerning timing (the effects of consumption on labour market may not be immediately). Following the classification of frequency pattern adopted by Martin, Beaumont and Kupper (2003), use frequency categories were divide into two mutually exclusive groups (based on consumption during the past month), characterizing 'frequent drug user' those who admitting to use each substance four or more times a week.

The employment variable L is a binary indicator of those 'in labour force', include the employed and self-employed, and those 'not in labour force' include the unemployed. We exclude from the definition individuals who were not of working age (in Spain the minimum age for working is 16 and the legal age for retirement is 65), full-time students, those who are disabled, and unemployed not looking for work.

Table I reports definitions for all of the variables, together with justifications for the inclusion in the empirical model.

Table I. Variable definition

Variables	Definition	Justification
<i>Endogenous variables</i>		
emp	1=currently employed	
freq	1=use dependency drugs four or more times a week during the past month	
<i>Demographic variables</i>		
age	Age at time of be admitted to treatment	Determine individual access to labour market and consumption patterns (experimental, recreational or dependency).
age2	Age squared/100	
ed1	1=no education and primary	The relationship between labour market outcomes and drug use is conditional to education attainment (Mullahy and Sindelar, 1989, 1993; French and Zarkin, 1995)
ed2	1=secondary education	
ed3	1=university	
numbarrest	Criminal record (number of arrests)	Individuals who use illicit drugs are more likely to commit crimes that affect their employability.
married	1=married or cohabiting	Many literature suggest that marriage is related to a reduction or cessation in substance use, cited as a protective factor against drug use (Bachman <i>et al.</i> , 1997; Moos <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Heinz <i>et al.</i> , 2009)
<i>Treatment, substance use and risk variables</i>		
psytreat	1=prior psychiatric treatment related to drug consumption	Modify their attitudes and behaviours related to drug use and abuse.
ageconsump	Age of first consumption	Previous literature considers future effects of early life behaviour, such us drug consumption on labour productivity (Burguess and Propper, 1998).
ageconsump2	Ageconsump squared/100	
consyears	Years of consumption (lifetime substance use)	Variable that collects cumulative effects of substance use. Continuous drug use can be symptom of pathological use or dependence at some point in the lifetime (Buchmueller and Zuvekas, 1998; MacDonald and Pudney, 2000)
drugpart	1=drug-dependent partner	It is likely that partners were involved actively in the so-called drug life (Laudet <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Comfort <i>et al.</i> , 2003)

Descriptive statistics were segmented between employment status and the full sample in table II. The prevalence of use dependency drugs four or more times a week was above 57% for the full sample and 56% for respondents not in labour force report a frequent drug use (60% for those in work).

Table II. Descriptive statistics

Variables	All sample	Employed	Unemployed
<i>Endogenous variables</i>			
emp	0.438 (0.008)		
freq	0.577 (0.008)	0.601 (0.012)	0.559 (0.01)
<i>Demographic variables</i>			
age	33.55 (0.115)	33.17 (0.167)	33.84 (0.157)
age2	11.79 (0.079)	11.50 (0.115)	12.01 (0.109)
ed1	0.37 (0.008)	0.303 (0.011)	0.423 (0.01)
ed2	0.609 (0.008)	0.665 (0.011)	0.567 (0.01)
ed3	0.019 (0.002)	0.032 (0.004)	0.011 (0.002)
numbarrest	3.91 (0.134)	1.89 (0.12)	5.48 (0.214)
married	0.141 (0.005)	0.186 (0.009)	0.108 (0.006)
<i>Treatment, substance use and risk variables</i>			
psytreat	0.259 (0.007)	0.201 (0.009)	0.303 (0.009)
ageconsump	20.04 (0.092)	20.64 (0.141)	19.57 (0.121)
ageconsump2	4.36 (0.045)	4.61 (0.072)	4.16 (0.058)
consyears	13.47 (0.109)	12.49 (0.159)	14.23 (0.147)
drugpart	0.106 (0.005)	0.098 (0.007)	0.112 (0.006)
Sample size	4,057	1,775	2,282

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

4. Main results

The estimated coefficients and total marginal effects for the recursive bivariate probit model are reported in table III. We impose restrictions to improve the identification of the model and decide exclusion by first including the variables in both equations and omitting them from the equation(s) in which they were insignificant (Wilde, 2000). The estimated value of correlation ρ between the disturbances (the omitted factors) in the equations is 0.767 with a standard error of 0.126. For testing exogeneity hypothesis, the Wald statistic is 10.94 ($p=0.0009$), and for a chi-square with one degree of freedom this value indicates that ρ is significantly different from 0 and exogeneity hypothesis can be rejected. This suggests that drug use is rightly treated as an endogenous variable in employment equation and a recursive bivariate probit framework is justified to investigate the effect of drug use on labour force participation.

Table III. The effect of frequent drug use on employment: Recursive *BPM*

	Type of variable	Drug use equation		Employment equation		Total Marginal effects ^a	Std. Error
		Coefficient	Robust Std. Error	Coefficient	Robust Std. Error		
<i>age</i>	(continuous)	0.033	0.038	0.047*	0.016	+0.016	0.011
<i>age2</i>	(continuous)	-0.047**	0.02	-0.066*	0.025	-0.022	0.011
<i>drugpart</i>	(binary)	0.073	0.066	-0.005	0.063	-0.018	0.025
<i>numbarrest</i>	(continuous)	-0.02*	0.002	-0.038*	0.005	-0.014	0.003
<i>psytreat</i>	(binary)	-0.205*	0.045	-0.358*	0.044	-0.126	0.017
<i>married</i>	(binary)	-0.123**	0.059	0.262*	0.069	+0.159	0.023
<i>ed2</i>	(binary)	-0.107**	0.042	0.146*	0.051	+0.093	0.017
<i>ed3</i>	(binary)	-0.296**	0.145	0.483*	0.171	+0.309	0.054
<i>ageconsump</i>	(continuous)	-0.045	0.041			+0.01	0.008
<i>ageconsump2</i>	(continuous)	0.11**	0.044			-0.024	0.007
<i>consyears</i>	(continuous)	0.021	0.035			-0.004	0.008
<i>freq</i>	(binary)			-1.145*	0.179	-0.473	0.074
<i>constant</i>				-0.167	0.311		
<i>rho</i>		0.767	0.126				
Wald test of $\rho=0$		$chi2(1) = 10.9457$	$Prob>chi2 = 0.0009$				

Significance levels: *1%, **5%. Observations: 4,057

^a As suggested by Greene (2003), marginal effects are calculated as the change in the probability of being in work of being a frequent drug user relative to being a non-frequent user holding all other explanatory variables at their sample mean values.

Looking first at the drug use equation, variables such as received psychiatric treatment and married have a significant negative impact on frequent drug use probability (protective factors against drug consumptions). Estimated coefficients on education variables suggest that, with respect to the omitted category (no education and primary), completion of either a university degree or secondary education reduced probability of being a frequent drug user. Finally, years of consumption and drug-dependent partner have the expected sign but are not statistically significant at 5% level.

Examining the employment equation, a significant impact of frequent drug use on employment is estimated. The negative signs indicate that, other things equal, individuals who use dependency drugs four or more times a week during the past month are less likely to participate in the labour force. Numerically, this is the strongest effect, decreasing the likelihood of being in work by a full 0.473. An explanation of this significant effect is that frequent users of dependency drugs are more likely to use simultaneously other types of drugs, addictive substances with negative consequences for their physical and psychological wellbeing (Buchmueller and Zuvekas, 1998). These consumptions contribute to increase the effect of the primary substance consumed but it is difficult to determine the relative contribution of each type of substance.

Looking briefly at the effect of the other variables, we can identify the importance of education and married to increases the probability of being in the labour force (married has a substantial positive effect of 0.159 on the probability of labour force participation). In contrast, we find that individuals who received prior psychiatric treatment and have a long criminal record are less likely to be in work.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to re-examine the relationship between illicit drug use and labour market status using information from a clinical record data. We account for a possible unobserved correlation between drug use and labour participation through the use of a *RBPM* as an alternative approach to

the estimation techniques used in previous literature. We confirm that drug use is endogenously determined with labour participation and a *RBPM* is an appropriate method in order to control this problem.

The results do not differ from other empirical research and provides evidence to support a highly significant relationship between drug use and participation in the labour force (after controlling for endogeneity). We have shown that frequent use of dependency drugs greatly decreases the likelihood of being in work.

Several limitations of the study must be considered. First, frequency of drug use is not the best predictor of whether or not an individual has a drug problem. Future research should consider individual physiological and psychological response to drug consumption in the model specification (Buchmueller and Zuvekas, 1998). Second, it would have been interesting to analyze longitudinal data on the same individuals. Assuming that there is a lag before the effect of drug use is reflected in observed outcomes of labour market, the cross-sectional design does not allow us to analyze long-term consumption patterns and how these patterns were related to labour market performance. While the corresponding population is of great interest from a public health perspective, given that the sample consists largely of those who engage in the behaviour under examination and might seek treatment because of a specific value of the outcome being studied, we must be cautious about generalizing these results.

From a policy-maker perspective, the results derive here show the potentially labour market-related costs of drug use and abuse, mainly in terms of production loss, and the need to integrate active employment policies and rehabilitation programs for users of psychoactive substances. From an empirical research perspective, our study has two contributions: the use of clinical data of drug users and a recursive simultaneous-equations model approach as an alternative for estimating the effect of drug use on labour participation.

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