Raising the take-up of social assistance benefits through a simple mailing: evidence from a French field experiment

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Abstract

This paper deals with the puzzle of an unduly low take-up rate for social assistance benefits in France. In order to investigate this phenomenon, we conduct an experimental evaluation in the form of a Randomized Control Trial involving the influences of informational complexity and informational availability. We examined the effect of a change in the information set which is sent to these households just after they claim the allocation. Our findings suggest that costless actions on the part of program administrators are able to substantially increase take-up. In order to be effective, these actions should target households according to their individual attributes.

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