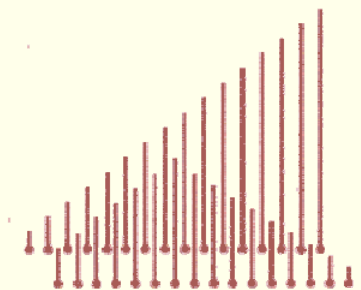


niesr

Considering a ‘pared-down’ random assignment evaluation

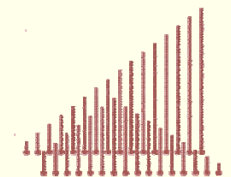
Richard Dorsett



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Social Research

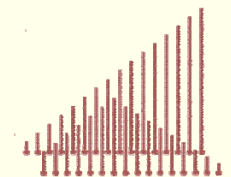
Elements of ERA evaluation

- Design
- Implementation – technical advisers ensuring programme fidelity; evaluation team working alongside DWP/JCP
- Process study – understanding the nature of the treatment in practice
- Impact study – estimating effects of ERA
- Non-participants study – external validity?
- Cost benefit analysis



Considering a 'pared-down' RA

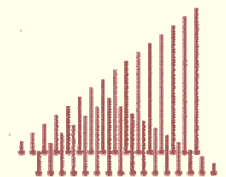
- Is the programme new? If not, consider:
 - less intensive monitoring
 - smaller-scale process study
 - using existing cost information for CBA
- Is the programme voluntary? If not:
 - non-participation analysis becomes less important
- Are outcomes narrowly-defined? If so:
 - use available administrative data (benefit receipt, benefit amount, employment status, earnings)



Example: ND25+ for the over-50s

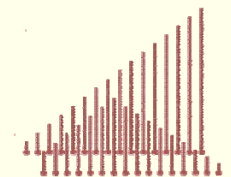
- Full New Deal 25+ participation mandatory for under-50s, voluntary for those 50+
- DWP evaluation: employment and benefit effects of mandating full participation for those 50+

→ i.e. extending existing, mandatory programme to encourage moves off benefit and into work



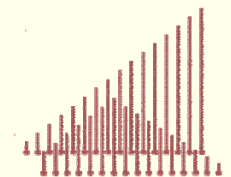
ND25+: randomisation process

- Randomisation tool developed in-house to:
 - carry out random assignment
 - collect background details
 - provide checks/safeguards
- Intended to run on advisers' network but instead telephone hotline at DWP
- This worked but more time for planning may have allowed more integrated solution

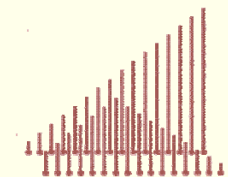
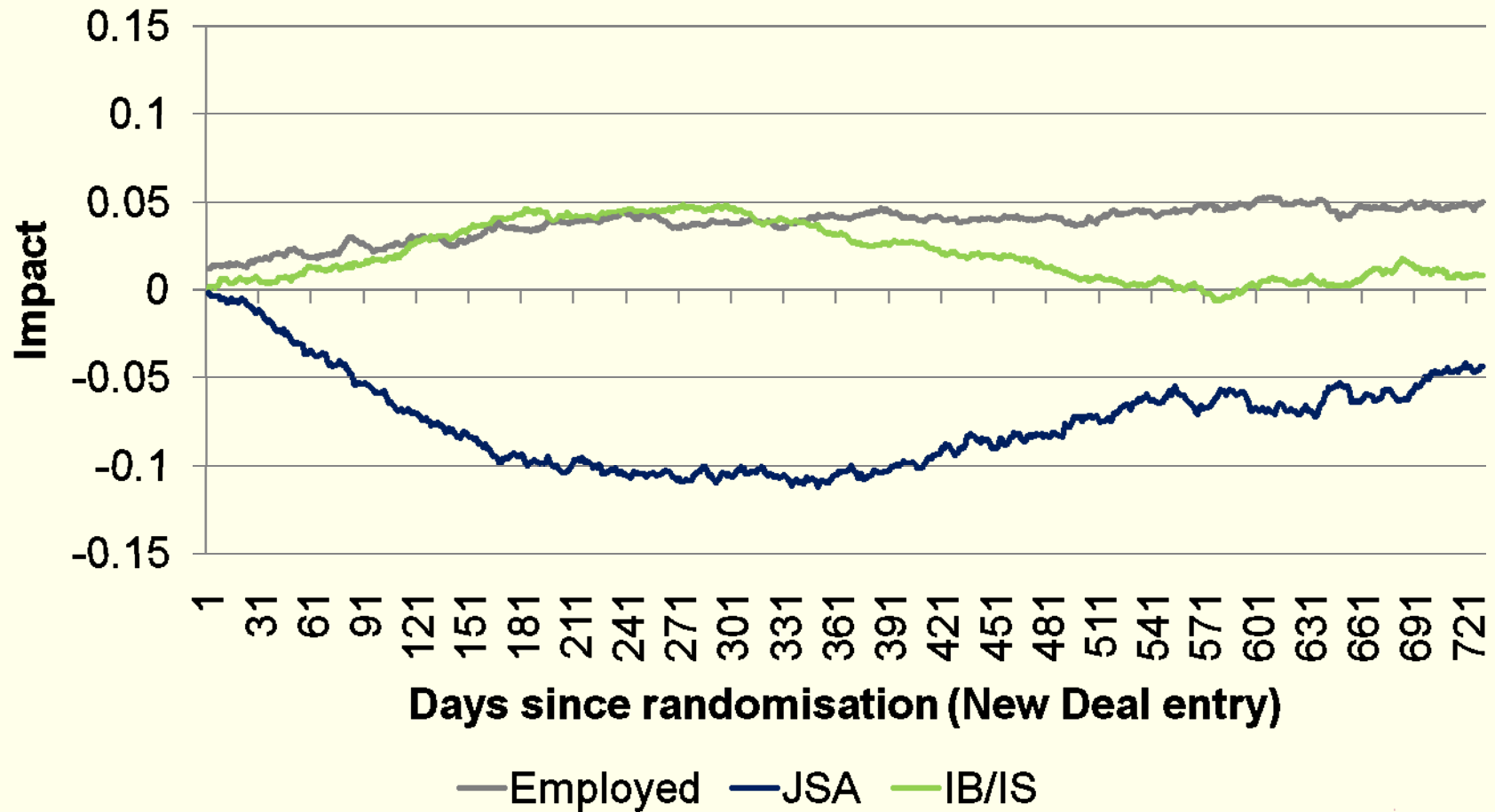


ND25+: data processing

- RA data linked to administrative data:
 - New Deal participation data
 - DWP benefit data
 - HMRC employment data
- Monthly monitoring reports to:
 - show performance of random assignment
 - identify possible problems
 - Provide emerging evidence on impacts



ND25+: plausible results



Final points

- Main point: in some cases, a ‘pared-down’ RA evaluation may be appropriate
- More broadly: need experiments cost more than non-experimental approaches?
 - often greater lead-in time for RA evaluations; monitoring of randomisation also required.
 - some expenses (implementation, process study) incurred also with non-RA approaches
 - survey data and cost data may be cheaper with RA (since only post-treatment pilot areas)

