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## **Self-medication model and evidence from Portugal**

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### **Objectivos (Objectives):**

Self-medication (SM) is the selection and the use of medicines by individuals to treat self-recognised illnesses or symptoms. The increasing importance of SM makes it relevant to do an empirical study about the its determinants factors, so that policy makers may better focus SM promotion. Our aim is to extend the model by Chang&Trivedi (2003) in order to include the time allocation, which was left out in their theoretical proposal. Their work is centered on a developing country, where there is no time constraint to be considered when people choose SM. In developed countries, most people face a decision on the allocation of the limited time, thus this must be taken into account when modelling the decision to SM.

### **Metodologia (Methodology):**

Our contribution comes therefore from the extension of previous work to developed countries. We use data from Portugal, which is characterised by a universal public health system. This data is from the 4th National Health Survey (2005) which comprises information on 33667 adults. We estimated a simple probit of self-medication. Our estimation is run for all adults, but also for gender and age subsamples, improving in this way the understanding of the factors that determine the choice of SM in Portugal.

### **Resultados (Results):**

Main result shows that waiting time is not a simple concept. While people may accept to wait long for an appoint and chosen not to take any OTC, waiting in the doctor office is badly perceived and choosing SM is faster and preferable. Our results also show that there are a few differences in the factors that explain SM according to age and gender, which matters por policy purposes.

Another interesting result concerns risk aversion. Those who smoke have a lower risk aversion than the others. In general estimation we find a positive sign, but not significant, that may indicate that the less risk averse individuals are more willing to selfmedicate.

### **Conclusões (Conclusions):**

The results obtained here give a good value added to policy makers because we not only found the general determinant factors that explain the choice of SM but we have also provided some differences between young and old adults and between men and women.