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DISCUSSION: The Cognitive and Economic Impact of Social Activities in Older Age: Evidence from 17 European Countries

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Summary

- Social activities have a positive effect on cognition
 - Positive economic consequences
- Causality? Methodological concerns!
- ***Empirically robust estimates of the causal effect of participation in social activities on the cognitive abilities of older Europeans***
 - *Nonparametric estimation methods that bound the causal effect of interest*
 - *Addresses endogeneity/Weak assumptions of data*

What I like about the paper

- Methodology
- Offers clarity on causality and the magnitude of the effect of social activity on cognition
- Potential policy implications

How could the paper be improved?

- **Positioning**
 - State more explicitly
 - Methodological not substantive
 - Shed light on the magnitude of the effect, establish causality through nonparametric estimation methods
- **Explanation of findings**
 - Why is the effect stronger for women than for men?

How could the paper be improved?

- **Definition “social activity”**
 - “number of concepts in the social sciences & philosophy”
 - “agency, social relations/actions, interpersonal relationships, human migration”
- **Conceptualization “social activity”**
 - Not included: having/meeting friends
 - 79% not socially active! Result of conceptualization?
 - Greece, Portugal, Poland, Italy, Spain score low

How could the paper be improved?

- **Policy implications**

- Link to methodological contribution
- Vague: “ policies targeting the reduction of the employment gap between older women and men”

“Promoting active aging should be a priority/subsidized”

- Many opportunities but 79%(!) are not active
- Not offering more but getting people to do something



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MORE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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