

The ESRC Network for Integrated Behavioural Science is a partnership among the Universities of Nottingham, Warwick, and East Anglia. Visit us online at <http://www.behavioural-science.ac.uk>

Workshop News

In collaboration with colleagues at UEA, NIBS hosted (online) a public workshop on *Behavioural Science and Market Regulation*. We'd like to thank all our speakers including the two keynotes - [Stefano Della Vigna](#) (University of California at Berkeley) and [John Vickers](#) (University of Oxford). The event also featured a 'round table' discussion on 'The distribution of responsibility between consumers, firms and regulators', which was chaired by Amelia Fletcher (recently awarded a CBE in the Queen's birthday honours). Among those present were regulators from Ofwat, Ofcom, Ofgem, FCA and CMA. The [programme is available online](#) (PDF).

Our annual 'internal' workshop in which NIBS members share their research within the group, also took place in September.

PhD Event Online

Nottingham hosted the [annual PhD-led CCC event](#) online, in collaboration with the Universities of East Anglia and Amsterdam. NIBS PhDs from Warwick were also invited to join the discussions.

Advance Notice – SPUDM 2021

Next year's Subjective Probability, Utility, and Decision Making (SPUDM) conference (22 to 26 August) will be hosted by University of Warwick. We are in discussion with colleagues at Warwick Business School to get NIBS involved. We'll bring you more information nearer the time, but in the meantime you can check the [WBS event page for updates](#).

NIBS Research Update

With the closure of our decision-making labs, many of our planned experiments are being adapted to run online. Our Researchers are

also getting involved in new research to advance our knowledge of Covid-19 and human behaviour in relation to the virus.

*Professor Graham Loomes was interviewed (Episode 12) for [WBS's Core Insights Podcast Series: Leading through COVID-19](#). He discussed whether Governments should be up front about the trade-offs made in relaxing lockdown. You can also check out Nick Chater's interview in Episode 3, which examines the biases that afflict leaders in a crisis

*Related to the above, Graham also discussed the trade-offs and lockdown in [The Conversation](#) and [Geographical](#); and featured on ITV News Central.

*NIBS PhD student, Merle van den Akker interviewed @NickJChater about public policy for Covid19 and how behavioural science was applied, for her blog [Questioning Behaviour \(Episode 11\)](#)

*Dr Ash Luckman presented 'Risk Compensation from Mask Usage Reduces Preferences for Distancing during Covid-19' at the NIBS workshop.

*Professors John Gathergood & Neil Stewart are investigating 'real-time evaluation of the effects of Covid-19 and policy responses on consumer and small business finances' in conjunction with the UK Financial Conduct Authority and retail banks.

*John has also contributed to a number of articles in the *Economics Observatory* which provides a forum for Q and A about Coronavirus and the UK economy. Here are some of the entries (published at various times and last updated at the end of October 2020).

[What will be the impact of the crisis on household finances?](#) The Covid-19 crisis is causing a deep recession and generating a shock to household finances which is hitting

some households much more than others. The policy response in support of household finances has been radical, both in using extensive fiscal support to insure household incomes, and swift regulatory changes to amend the terms and conditions of financial contracts between lenders and households. It remains unclear what the long-run effects will be.

[How should the government support households with unpayable debts?](#) In the now seemingly likely event of a slow recovery from the Covid-19 recession and high levels of unemployment, the government will need schemes to manage insolvency for households at risk of being unable to pay their debts. This article discusses what types of support could be most effective.

[Might Coronavirus bring a lasting shift to online spending?](#) During the national lockdown in March, online spending naturally became a bigger share of total UK household consumption. While offline spending rose after restrictions eased, there is early evidence of a 'new normal' in which online spending is roughly 25% higher than its pre-pandemic level.

[How can authorities control Coronavirus without killing the economy?](#) Severe restrictions introduced in response to Covid-19 have disrupted economic activity, especially retail, services and hospitality. Evidence from local lockdowns suggests that it is possible to control the virus without resorting to measures that damage the economy.

PhD Internship

NIBS PhD student, Sarah Bowen, undertook a UKRI policy internship with the Behavioural Insights Team within the Department of Health (PHEBI) for 3 months in summer.

During the internship Sarah collaborated on many projects using behavioural science applied to health improvement decisions. One

policy brief, which was sent to the Cabinet Office, summarised current evidence on financial incentives and the uptake of healthy behaviours. She presented work in the cross-government behavioural insights network and at an Air Quality conference run by PHE. Other responsibilities included producing policy briefs and literature reviews; conducting focus groups; contributing to multiple academic papers; and improving her knowledge of the application of behavioural insights in public policy.

Welcome to new NEST Post Doc

Former CeDEx PhD student, Jesal Sheth, took up a new two-year Post Doc position, working with John, Neil and colleagues at the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST). Their research will focus on the impact of automatic enrolment into pensions on consumer financial outcomes.

Working Paper by NIBS collaborators

In experimental games, a substantial minority of players often fail to best respond. [In this working paper](#), Despoina Alempaki, Andrew M. Colman, Felix Koelle, Graham Loomes, and Briony D. Pulford investigate whether 'structuring' the pre-decision deliberation process produces greater consistency between individuals' stated values & beliefs on the one hand and their choice of action on the other.

Take it or leave it: the effect of time-limited offers on consumer behaviour

Making time-limited offers is a common retail pricing strategy. Economic theory implies that such offers inhibit price search, making markets less competitive. [In this paper, published in the Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization](#), authors Sugden, Wang & Zizzo investigate experimentally whether this effect is intensified by behavioural factors – specifically, feedback-conditional regret, reduced decision quality due to time constraints, and aversion to small-scale risk.