



Mental Health and the Targeting of Social Assistance

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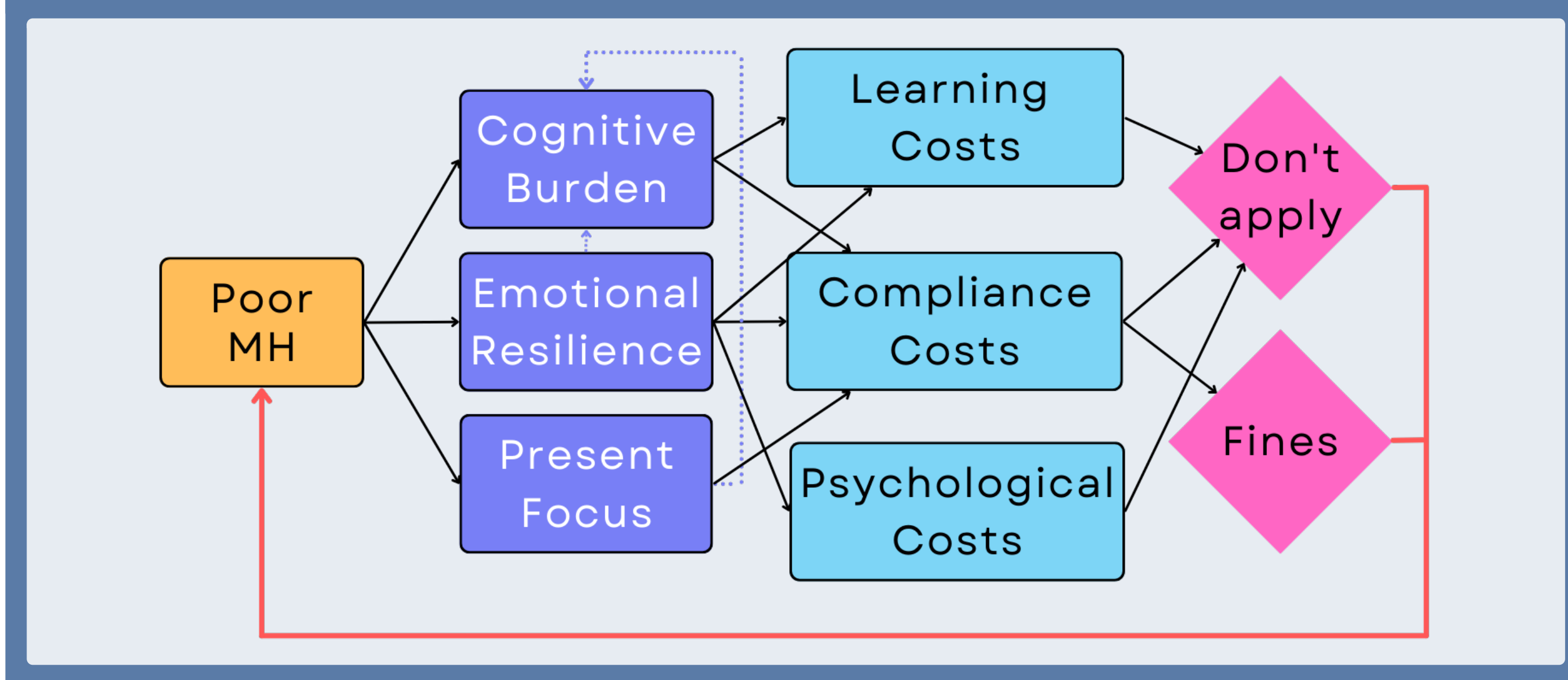
Summary

Are people with poor mental health (MH) being screened out of receiving social assistance (SA)? Poor MH inhibits cognition / emotional resilience + exacerbates present focus.^[1] All make it harder to overcome administrative burdens associated w/ taking-up.^[2, 3] \implies SA **ill-targeted**... ^[4]

poor MH people likely high-need **and** not receiving.

Data from the Netherlands shows people w/ poor MH take-up less SA as long as MH is sufficiently poor. Causal effects can be estimated by exploiting policy reforms affecting ordeals and changing access to MH-care.

Conceptual Framework



Methods

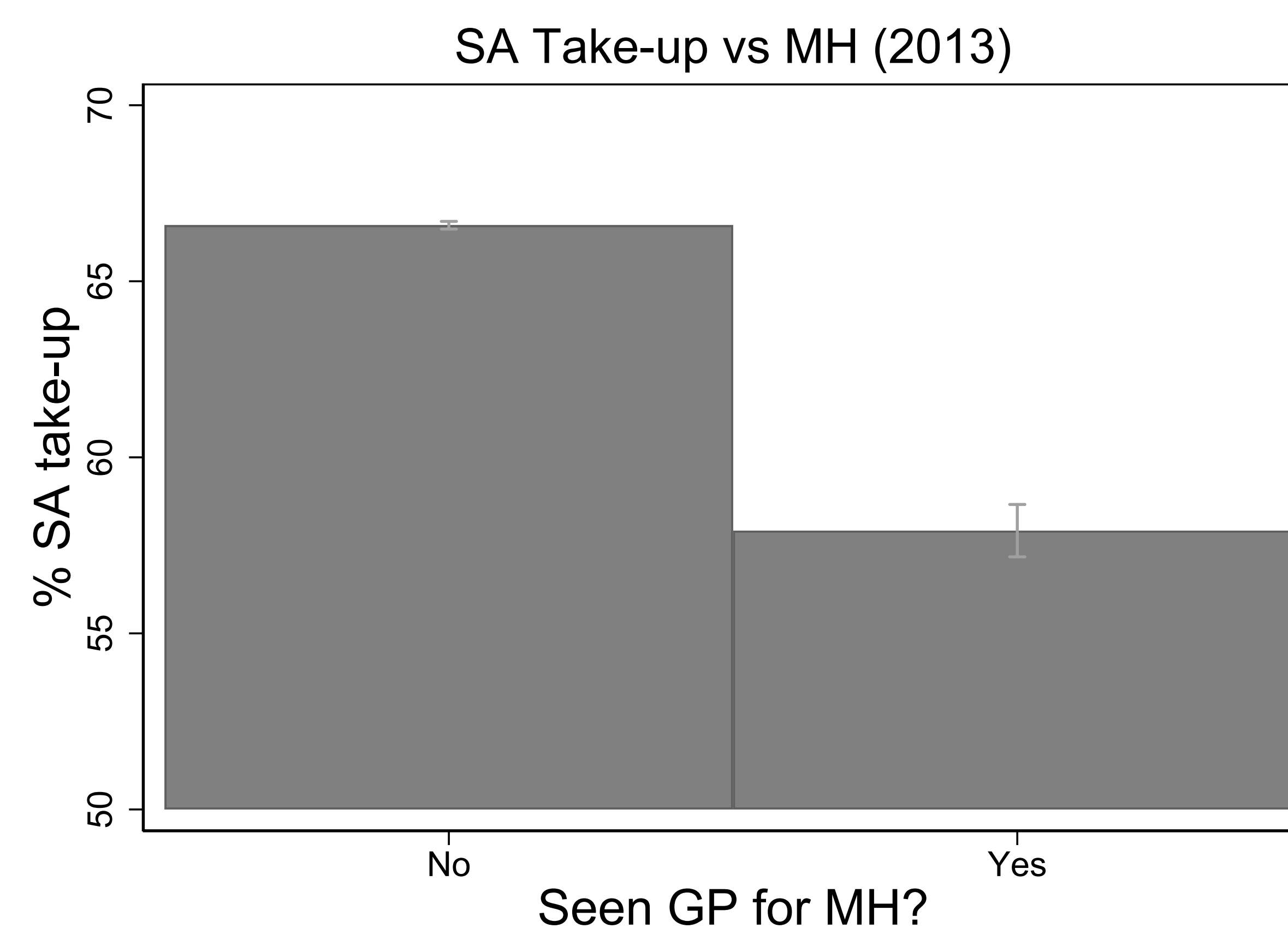
Admin data from the Netherlands. Population = people likely eligible for SA. MH measured by MH-care costs. Descriptive analysis: regress % SA take-up on MH pre/post MH-care reform (2014) w/ controls. Proposed causal analysis: IV SA take-up by ordeals + look at selection on MH, IV MH w/ access to care + look at take-up.

Key References & Acknowledgements

[1] I.H. Gotlib & J. Joormann. Cognition and depression: current status and future directions. *Ann. Rev. of Clin. Psych.*, 2010
 [2] J. Christensen et. al. Human Capital and administrative burden: the role of cognitive resources in citizen-state interactions *Public Administration Review*, 2020
 [3] E. Bell et. al. Health in citizen-state interactions: how physical and mental health problems shape experiences of administrative burden and reduce take-up *Public Administration Review*, 2022
 [4] A. Finkelstein & M. Notowidigdo. Take-up and targeting: experimental evidence from SNAP. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2019
 I acknowledge financial support from ESRC + STICERD and data help from William Parker.

Descriptive Results

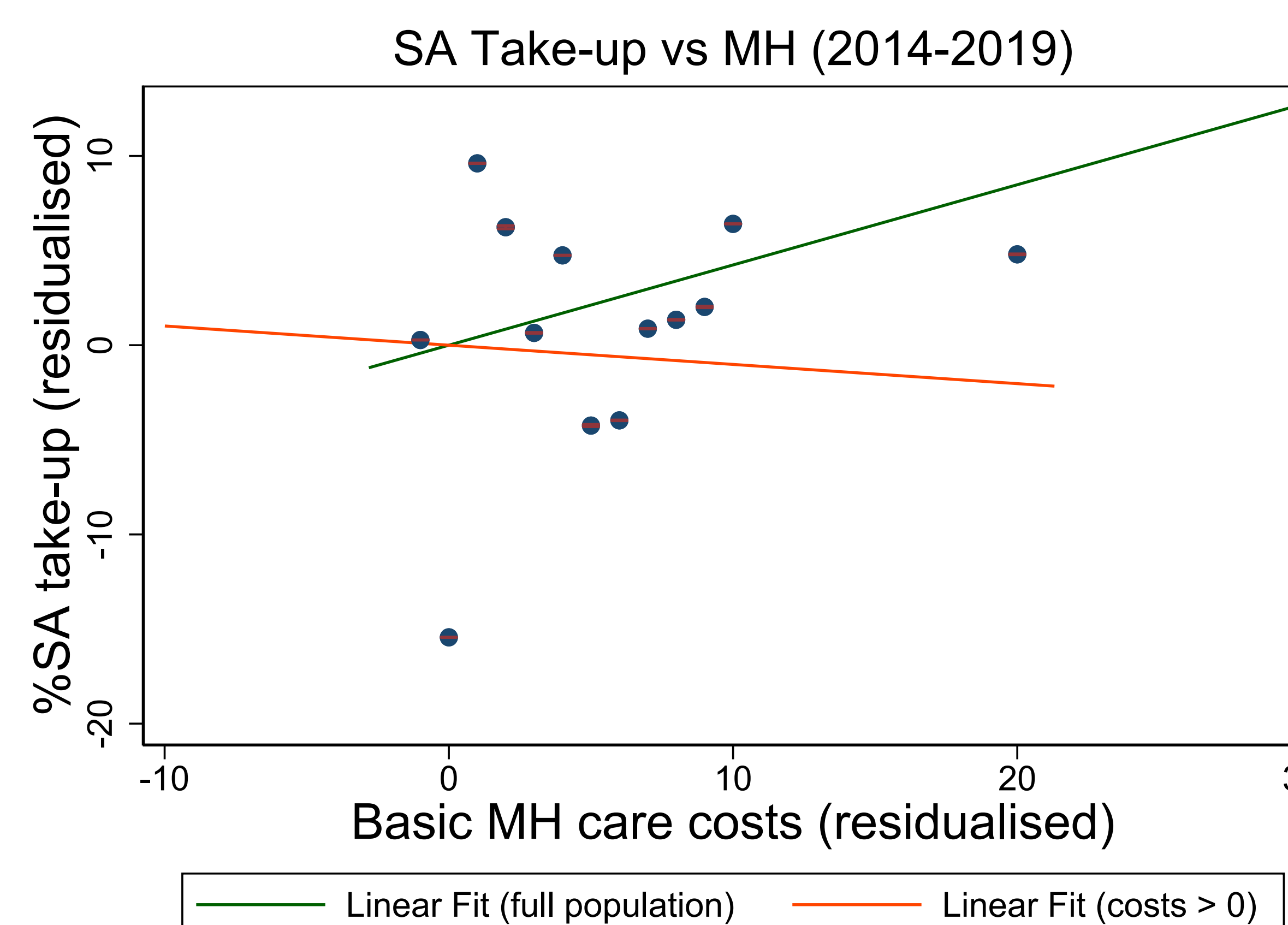
Pre all reforms: raw comparison...



with controls...

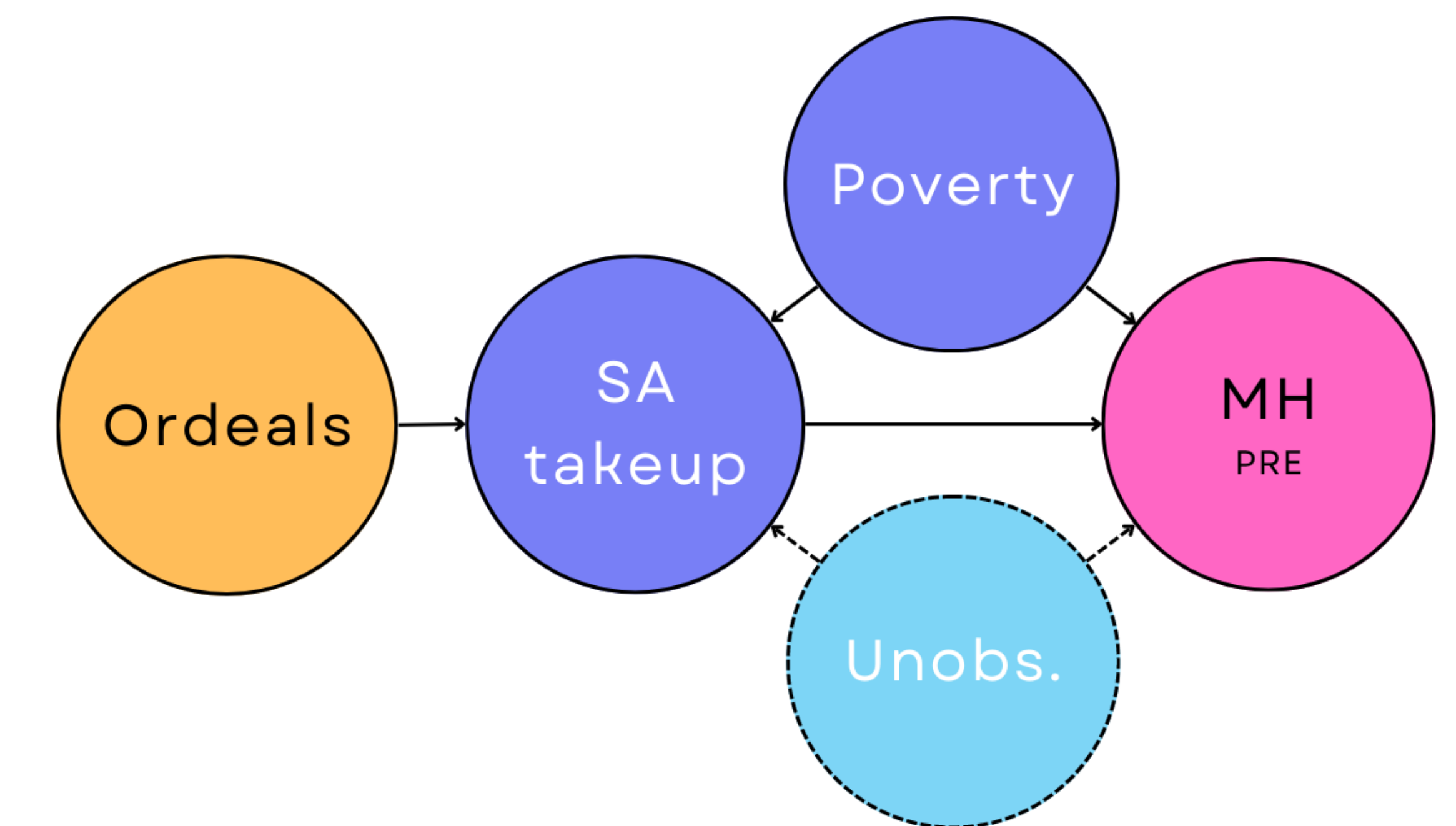
	% SA take-up
Seen GP for MH?	-1.085*** (0.295)
Controls (incl. wealth)	✓
N	733,065
R-squared	0.355

Post MH reforms: with controls incl. year FEs...

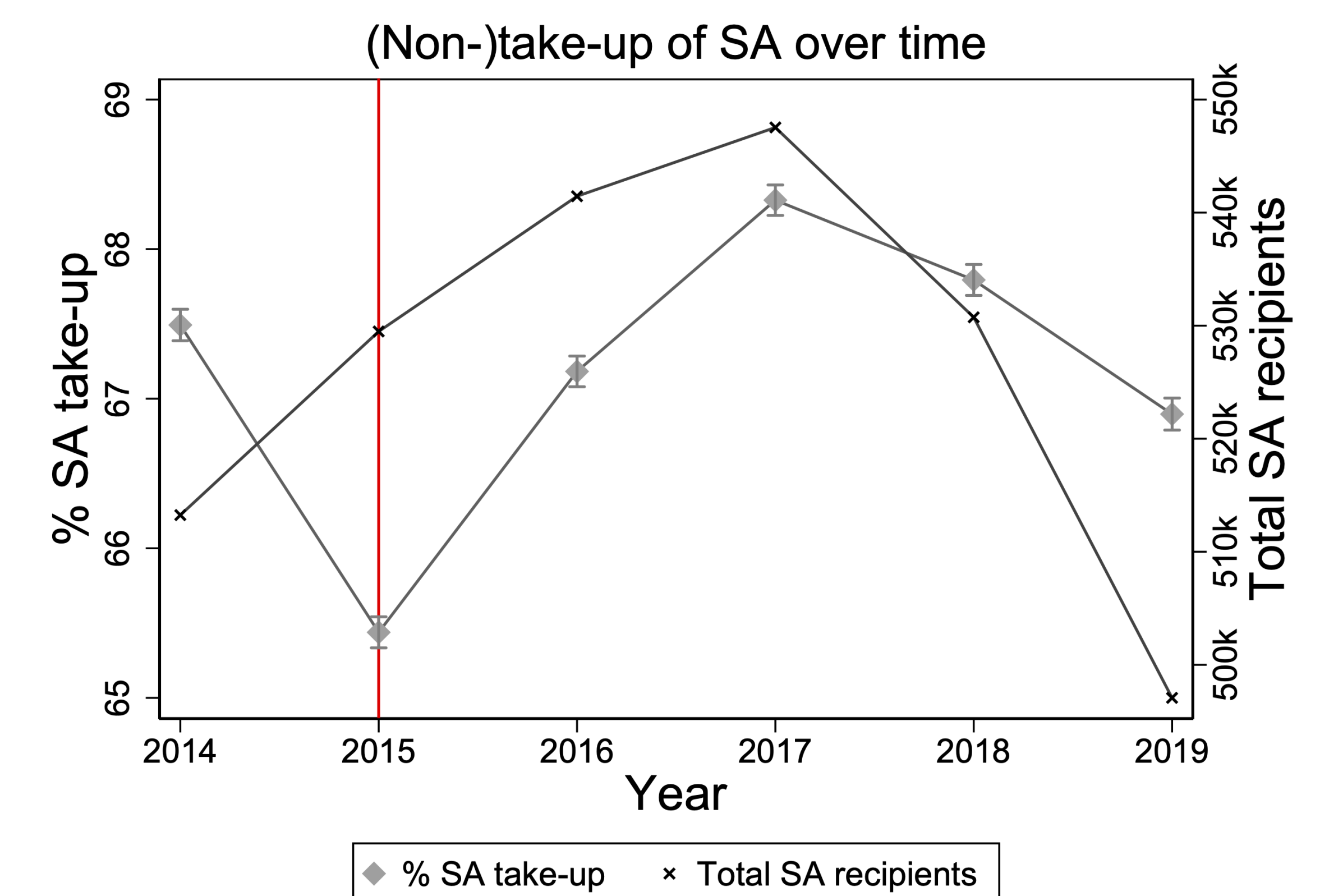


Causal Analysis

Ordeal IV: Participation Act (2015) + access to social counselors.



How does Participation Act affect take-up?



Care Access IV: 2008 intro CBT coverage / 2012 reduction in # consultations covered / 2014 large restructuring

