

ScotDoc Colloquium in Accounting & Finance

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Presentation

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Primary Area of Study: SME Business Finance/Economics; Gender Diversity

Title: *“The menopause transition and the gender gap in entrepreneurship”*

Abstract

Whilst the gender gap in employment has significantly reduced in recent decades, the gender gap in entrepreneurship persists, whether measured by propensity to become a business owner or the relative size and growth of women-led ventures. Many causal channels have been investigated – however, we find research considering factors that influence this gender gap in mid-life (c. 45-65 years of age) lacking.

The menopause transition is a natural, biological change that occurs for the vast majority of women. A limited body of research finds a strong association between menopausal symptom strength and reduced work ability and the impact on women in employment has been subject to public debate in the UK in recent years. However, no literature exists on the impact of the menopause transition on the self-employed / business owners.

To address this important research gap, we propose two identification strategies. The first characterises menopause as an exogenous ‘shock’, and we estimate its impact on self-employment, working hours and income using difference-in-differences (DiD) methodology. The second exploits a quasi-natural experiment – the premature suspension, in 2002, of a large US randomised control trial on Hormone Replacement Therapy – that lead to a significant drop in the use of treatments for menopausal symptoms. Models will be estimated using data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing.