1. **Title:**
The Effect of Social Distancing Measures on the Demand for Intensive Care: Evidence on COVID-19 in Scandinavia

2. **Authors and affiliations and contact emails:**
Steffen Juranek – NHH Norwegian School of Economics – steffen.juranek@nhh.no
Floris T. Zoutman – NHH Norwegian School of Economics, NOCET and CESifo - floris.zoutman@nhh.no

3. **Abstract:**
Understanding the effectiveness of social distancing on the spread of COVID-19 is crucial to justify the economically costly measures imposed by many governments around the world. We present a case study on the effect of social distancing measures on the pressure on the health care systems across Scandinavia. Whereas Denmark and Norway imposed relatively strict measures, Sweden follows a more lenient approach. We use a difference-in-difference approach in which Sweden serves as a counterfactual to Denmark/Norway to estimate the effectiveness of the measures. We estimate that lockdown begins to affect the number of patients in ICU after approximately 15-20 days. Denmark (Norway) would have seen an excess daily increase of around 7 (6) patients per day into intensive care if they would have followed the Swedish approach. This implies that, as of April 8th, both countries would have had roughly twice the number of patients in intensive care had they not initiated lockdown.

4. **Data description:**
Data from the national health authorities of Denmark, Norway and Sweden

5. **JEL codes for the project:**
Modelling and Simulating the Epidemic’s diffusion