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EDUCATION

Duke University, Durham (NC)	2012 - 2018
PhD in Economics (expected)	
Bocconi University, Milan (Italy)	2009 - 2012
MSc in Economics and Social Sciences	
Bocconi University, Milan (Italy)	2006 - 2009
BA in Economics and Social Sciences	

RESEARCH

Research Interests: Development Economics, Health Economics, Political Economy

Job Market Paper

“The Political Economy of Health Epidemics: Evidence from the Ebola Outbreak”

Abstract. Health epidemics represent a unique test of governmental accountability. Compared to other disasters, the way the government responds is crucial to stop the contagion and limit the ultimate costs to citizens. However, political motives may distort the allocation of governmental resources. In this paper, I study the response of the Liberian government to the 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak, and the subsequent effects on citizens’ voting behavior and political perceptions. I combine proprietary data on Ebola cases, novel surveys, and publicly available data on the government’s relief effort and post-outbreak Senatorial election. I first provide evidence of limited governmental response before the arrival of foreign aid, in contrast to improved assistance after aid was provided. I then build a spatio-temporal epidemiological model to estimate the ex-ante optimal allocation of relief effort. I find that the government misallocated resources towards swing villages. Voters in turn reacted to the differential response: the incumbent party lost political support in areas hit in the first part of the epidemic, while it did not lose votes in areas hit in the second part and in swing villages. I conclude by discussing the costs to citizens of the political misallocation of resources. The findings provide novel evidence on the presence of strategic electoral motives in the allocation of resources in health epidemics.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

“Household Beliefs about Malaria Testing and Treatment in Western Kenya: The Role of Health Worker Adherence to Malaria Test Results” (with Indrani Saran, Diana Menya, Wendy Prudhomme O’Meara”) *Malaria Journal*, 2017; 16:349

“Is Traditional Male Circumcision Effective as HIV Prevention Strategy? Evidence from Lesotho” *PLoS ONE*, 2017; 12 (5).

“Assessing the independent and combined effects of subsidies for antimalarials and rapid diagnostic testing on fever management decisions in the retail sector: Results from a factorial randomized trial in western Kenya” (with Wendy Prudhomme O’Meara, Jeremiah Laktabai, Manoj Mohanan, Adriane Lesser, Alyssa Platt, Elizabeth Turner, Diana Menya) *BMJ Global Health*, 2016; 1 (2):e000101.

Working Papers**“The Local Health Impacts of Natural Resources’ Booms”**

Abstract. Do booms in production of natural resources benefit or harm the health of local communities? This paper uses administrative micro-data on local natural resources and health outcomes to study how increases in the production of minerals affect birth outcomes in Brazilian municipalities. I address the endogeneity of production exploiting fluctuations in international commodity prices and the pre-existing spatial variation in mineral endowments. Difference in difference estimates suggest that, following booms in mineral production, local communities experience lower fetal and infant mortality and number of low-weight births. I discuss mechanisms in light of the standard trade-off between the benefits - more wealth from taxes and job opportunities - and costs - corruption or pollution - of natural resources.

“Can individuals beliefs help us understand non-adherence to malaria test results? Evidence from rural Kenya” (with Manoj Mohanan, Wendy Prudhomme OMeara, and Elizabeth L Turner), Economic Research Initiatives at Duke (ERID) Working Paper No. 243.

Abstract. Malaria testing remains relatively uncommon in endemic countries, individuals often purchase antimalarial drugs without diagnostically-confirmed malaria. More than a quarter of those testing negative still purchase first-line antimalarial therapy (artemisinin-based combination therapies, ACTs). ACT overuse depletes scarce resources available for subsidies, and contributes to parasite resistance. As part of a randomized experiment in Western Kenya that provided a subsidized rapid diagnostic test (RDT) and/or a conditionally-subsidized ACT for febrile individuals with diagnostically-confirmed malaria, we examine whether treatment decisions are associated with beliefs that the illness is malaria. We conceptualize treatment-seeking as two sequential decisions: whether (i) to get tested and (ii) to purchase ACT. First, we study whether prior beliefs are associated with each decision. Second, we analyze how these behaviors are associated with posterior beliefs (one week after the intervention). Prior beliefs are not associated with the decision to get tested, instead RDT price is the driving force. For malaria-negative individuals, prior beliefs do not explain ACT purchasing behavior and those who purchased ACT reported a higher posterior belief than those who did not. In order to improve utilization of information from malaria testing, further research is needed to understand how beliefs are shaped and how actions shape beliefs.

Work in Progress

“The Health Impacts and Effective Delivery of Maternal Cash Transfers in Myanmar” (with Erica Field) - *Baseline and Midline completed, Endline data collection in Spring 2018*

“Is the Phone Mightier than the Virus? Cell Phone Access and Epidemic Containment Efforts” (with Erica Field and Robert Gonzalez) - *Data gathering and analysis*

“The Impact of Formal Finance on the Moneylender Market: Evidence from Rural India” (with Isabelle Cohen, Erica Field and Rohini Pande) - *Empirical analysis*

“Does the Experience of Malaria Testing Increase Trust the Results? Providing Rapid Diagnostic Test through Community Health Workers” (with Indrani Saran, Diana Menya, Laktabai Jeremiah, Elizabeth Turner and Wendy Prudhomme OMeara) - *Manuscript preparation*

“Development of Touchscreen based methods for elicitation of subjective expectations in India” (with Manoj Mohanan) - *Manuscript preparation*

“Eliciting Beliefs and Subjective Expectations in the Context of Chronic Disease, Tamil Nadu, India” (with Manoj Mohanan and Harsha Thirumurthy) - *Exploratory pilot completed*

Other research (Protocols, Policy Reports and Op-Ed Contributions)

“An innovative public-private partnership to target subsidized antimalarials: a study protocol for a cluster randomized controlled trial to evaluate a community intervention in Western Kenya” (with Jeremiah Laktabai, Adriane Lesser, Alyssa Platt, Manoj Mohanan, Diana Menya, Wendy Prudhomme O’Meara, Elizabeth L Turner) *BMJ Open*, 2017; 7(3):e013972.

“Feasibility Study: Technical options to implement a universal maternal and child cash transfer program in Myanmar”, IGC, UNICEF, Save the Children, 2015 (with Jenny Hilton)

“Leveraging Technology-Enabled Banking Agent Distribution Networks”, Fino Fintech Foundation, Interim Baseline Report, CIRM (Center for Insurance and Risk Management), 2014 (with Saurabh Sharma and Rupalee Ruchismita)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Duke University Summer 2016
Field Experiments (Graduate summer course)

Teaching Assistant for Prof. Erica Field, Duke University Fall 2015
Economics of Global Health (Undergraduate)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Duke University, Durham, NC June 2013 -
Research Assistant Durham, NC

- Research Assistant for Prof. Erica Field, in Durham, NC on the project “Impact of Rural Microfinance on Poverty and Well-being”.

UNICEF, Save the Children, and IGC May-August 2015
Consultant Yangoon, Myanmar

- Consultant for a feasibility study to implement a maternal and child cash transfer program in Myanmar.

World Bank February 2012 - June 2012
Research Assistant Milan, Italy

- Research Assistant for Prof. Svensson, Prof. Bjorkman, Dr. de Walque, and Prof. Corno on the project “Short-term financial incentives, sexual behaviour and HIV”.

World Bank February 2011 - 2012
Research Manager Maseru, Lesotho

- Research Manager for Prof. Svensson, Prof. Bjorkman, Dr. de Walque, and Prof. Corno on the project “Short-term financial incentives, sexual behaviour and HIV”.

IGIER October 2010 - February 2011
Research Assistant Milan, Italy

- Research assistant on several project in development and health economics for Prof. Martina Bjorkman.

Mimoza Enterprises Finance Pvt. Ltd Summer 2009
Summer Intern Dehradun, UP, India

- Microfinance

FIELD WORK EXPERIENCE

Yangoon, Myanmar	May 2015, April 2016
Monrovia and Bong County, Liberia	April, July, December 2015, June 2017
Eldoret, Bungoma East, Kenya	July-August, December 2014
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India	July 2013, 2014
Maseru, Lesotho	February 2011-February 2012

PRESENTATIONS

2017: NEUDC (Tufts University, Medford, MA); APPAM Fall Research Conference (Chicago, IL); Annual Congress EEA/ESEM (Lisbon, Portugal); Annual International Conference of the Research Group on Development Economics (University of Gottingen, Germany); Development and Political Economics Graduate Student Conference (Stanford University, CA); Duke University Center for International and Global Studies (Duke University, Durham, NC).

2016: CEAR-CSAE Workshop, Eliciting Subjective Beliefs and Risk and Time Preferences in Developing Countries (Georgia State University, Atlanta); Duke Global Health Institute, Scholars' Seminar Series (Duke University, Durham, NC).

2015: iHEA, 11th World Congress (Milan, Italy); Department of Social Welfare (Naypyidaw, Myanmar); PAA Annual Meeting (San Diego, CA).

2014-2017: International Population, Health and Development Lunch (Duke University, Durham, NC).

HONORS AND AWARDS

2017: Conference Travel Award, Graduate School, Duke University

2015-2018: Duke Global Health Scholarship

2014-2017: Summer Research Fellowship, Graduate School, Duke University

2014-2018: Graduate Fellowship, Department of Economics, Duke University

2011-2012: "Premio all Studio", BCC Treviglio, Italy

GRANTS

2017: Travel Fund, Duke University (2,500\$)

2017: Duke Brazil Initiative Research Grants (2,500\$)

2017: Duke Policy Bridge, Sanford School of Public Policy (3,400\$)

2016: Working Groups on Global Issues for AY 2016-17, Duke University Center for International and Global Studies (DUCIGS), Global Challenges in Development Economics (1,000\$)

2016: Travel Fund, Duke University (2,400\$)

2016: Global Health Doctoral Dissertation Grant (12,500\$)

2016: International Growth Center, Myanmar 2016 (145,000£)

2015: Governance Initiative, J-PAL (5,350\$)

2015: International Growth Center, Liberia (63,000£)

2015: Travel Fund, Duke University (5,000\$)

REFEREE

World Development

PROGRAMMING SKILLS

STATA, ArcGIS, L^AT_EX 2_ε, Matlab, R, Survey CTO, CSPro.

LANGUAGES

Italian (mother tongue), English (fluent)

REFERENCES

Erica Field, Professor of Economics and Global Health [Chair]
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