

Chad Stecher

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Current Position

Assistant Professor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Department of Economics, August 2017 – present

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, University of California, Los Angeles, 2017
M.A. Economics, University of California, Los Angeles, 2012
B.A. in Economics and Mathematics, Colby College, 2008

Publications

Linnemayr S. & **Stecher, C.** 2017. “Behavioral Economic Incentives to Improve Adherence to Antiretroviral (ARV) Medication: Early Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Uganda.” *AIDS*; 31(5): pp. 719 – 26.

Linnemayr S. & **Stecher, C.** “Behavioral Economics Matters for HIV Research: The Impact of Behavioral Biases on Adherence to Antiretrovirals (ARVs).” *AIDS and Behavior*; 19(11): pp. 2069 – 75.

Data, A., Liu, J., Linnemayr, S. & **Stecher, C.** “The Impact of Natural Disasters on Child Health and Investments in Rural India.” *Social Science and Medicine*; 76(1): pp. 83 – 91.

Works in Progress

“Indiscriminate Social Learning among Physicians Providing HIV Treatment”

Social learning has been identified as an important mechanism for information transfer in the workplace; however, extant research on social learning has focused primarily on the beneficial effects of such “knowledge spillovers” on workers’ performance. The current paper contributes to this growing literature on social learning by identifying the detrimental as well as beneficial effects of social learning on performance in a high-stakes medical context: physicians’ HIV treatment practices. The findings reveal that inexperienced physicians indiscriminately learn proper and improper HIV treatment practices from their more-experienced peers, resulting in differential patient health outcomes depending on experienced peers’ task performance. The paper then uses network-structure analysis to identify organizational policies that leverage beneficial social learning effects to help reduce the transmission of improper treatment practices, thereby improving overall treatment performance and subsequent medical outcomes for HIV-infected patients.

“Can Behavioral Economic Incentives Promoting Medication Adherence Improve Other Intertemporal Choices?” (with Sebastian Linnemayr)

This paper evaluates the impact of behavioral economic incentives that target antiretroviral medication adherence on patients’ intertemporal decision-making in other settings. A variable-rewards incentive mechanism was implemented among a sample of HIV-infected adults through a randomized controlled trial in Kampala, Uganda between 2012 and 2015. As behavioral economic theory would suggest, larger intervention effects are observed among participants who display behavioral biases identified in the baseline survey. Survey measurements additionally quantify intervention effects on other behaviors, where preliminary results find that participants in the intervention group have increased savings and lower

rates of drinking and smoking. These findings suggest that behavioral economic interventions can induce positive spillover effects on intertemporal decision-making in other contexts.

“The Impact of Recession on Health Behavior”

This project describes how changes in market work hours affect the time allocated towards health maintenance behaviors over the business cycle. Utilizing daily time-use journals compiled by the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) between 2003 and 2014, the analysis focuses on the reallocation of time towards health promoting behaviors resulting from lost formal work hours during the great recession. Comparisons of time use before and after the recession, as well as between states that experienced different recession severities, find that roughly 10% of lost work hours are allocated to physical activities, increasing the probability of meeting the CDC’s daily recommendation of 30 minutes of physical exercise by 12%. This shift towards healthier behavior corroborates the previously observed cyclicity of personal health in the United States.

Sponsored Research

PI with MPIs Drs. Michael Fuccillo and Alex Federman. *Submitted*

Associative Habit Formation using Behavioral Economics and Mobile Health to Increase Treatment Adherence in COPD; R41 9909780

PI with MPI Dr. Sebastian Linnemayr and Co-I Dr. Sarah MacCarthy. *Submitted*

Nudging Habit Formation to Improve Long-term Medication Adherence (NuHabit); R34 MH119002

PI with Co-Is Drs. Jim Hendler and Mohammed Zaki, RPI, 2018 – present

Targeting Habit Formation Through a Smartphone Application; FY2018 KIP Award #141535 1092

Project consultant for PI Dr. Sebastian Linnemayr, RAND Corporation. 2017 – present

Behavioral Economics Incentives to Support HIV Treatment Adherence in Sub-Saharan Africa; NIMH/NIH: R01 MH110350

Research Assistant for PI Dr. Sebastian Linnemayr, RAND Corporation. 2012 – 2017

Variable Rewards Incentives for ART Adherence in Uganda; NIMH/NIH: R34 MH096609

Research Assistant for PI Dr. Ashelsha Datar, RAND Corporation. 2010 – 2012

Economics of Natural Disasters and Epidemics; NICHD/NIH: R03 HD061688

Teaching Experience

Instructor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Behavioral Economics (Undergraduate/Graduate): 4 semesters

Econometric Methods for Big Data (Undergraduate/Graduate): 2 semesters

Teaching Assistant, University of California, Los Angeles

Econometrics (Undergraduate): 1 quarter

Intermediate Microeconomics Theory (Undergraduate): 1 quarter

Principles of Microeconomics (Undergraduate): 1 quarter

Awards and Honors

2019	Class of 1951 Outstanding Teacher Award Nominee, RPI
2017 – 2018	Social Networks & Health Fellow, Duke University
2015 – 2016	NIA Predoctoral Fellowship, UCLA
2014 – 2015	NICHHD Predoctoral Fellowship, UCLA
2014	Teaching Assistant Award, UCLA
2013	NIH Research Grant, UCLA
2011	Undergraduate Mentor Scholarship, UCLA
2008	Highest Honors Mathematics Thesis, Colby College
2008	Homer T. Hayslett Prize in Statistics, Colby College
2007	Elected to Phi Beta Kappa, Colby College

Invited Presentations

2019	International Health Economics Association, Basel 2019 Congress
2019	Western Economic Association International, 94th Annual Conference
2018	6th Workshop in Behavioral and Experimental Health Economics, University of Oslo
2018	Department of Economics, SUNY-Albany
2018	Department of Economics, SUNY-Buffalo
2017	Institute for Healthcare Delivery Science Seminar Series, Ichan School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
2017	Rockefeller Institute of Government, SUNY-Albany
2017	Cancer Research Group (CARGO), RPI
2017	RPI-IBM Center for Health Empowerment by Analytics, Learning, and Semantics (HEALS), RPI

Departmental Service

Department of Economics, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Member, 2017 – 2019
Faculty Recruitment, 2017 – 2019
Tenure-track faculty lines: 4
Lecturer faculty lines: 2
Romesh Diwan Lecture Series Coordinator, 2018
Undergraduate Research Program Adviser, 2017 – 2019
Undergraduate dissertations: 4
Independent study projects: 2

Other Professional Experience

Senior Research Assistant, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, 2008 – 2010
Research Assistant for Professor Liam O'Brien, Colby College, 2006 – 2008
Summer Analyst, Analysis Group, Inc., Los Angeles, CA, 2006 & 2007