Mitchell VanVuren

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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CURRENT APPOINTMENT

Postdoctoral Associate, Yale Research Initiative on Innovation and Scale (Y-RISE), Yale University (since 2022)

EDUCATION

PhD in Economics, University of California, San Diego, 6/2022

Committee: Valerie Ramey (Co-chair), David Lagakos (Co-chair), Karthik Muralidharan, Titan Alon, Juan Herreño

B.S., Mathematics and Economics, University of Oregon, 2016

REFERENCES

Valerie Ramey, University of California, San Diego, vramey@ucsd.edu, (858) 534-2388

David Lagakos, Boston University, lagakos@bu.edu, (617) 353-8903

Titan Alon, University of California, San Diego, talon@ucsd.edu, (858) 534-3995

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Macroeconomics, Growth and Development, Healthcare, Computation

PUBLICATIONS

"Macroeconomic Effects of COVID-19 Across the World Income Distribution" with Titan Alon, Minki Kim, and David Lagakos, IMF Economic Review, August 2022

WORKING PAPERS

"Aggregate Effects of Public Health Insurance Expansion: The Role of Delayed Medical Care", November 2023

Evidence indicates many U.S. adults postpone medical care until they qualify for Medicare at age 65. This paper studies the aggregate consequences of expanding public health insurance access (e.g. Medicaid), accounting for reductions in delayed care, using a two-asset overlapping generations model with health investment and endogenous mortality. Reducing delayed care results in long-run savings as earlier treatment is less costly but increases total Medicare outlays as lower mortality leads to a larger senior population. I estimate the model to match quasi-experimental evidence on the extent of delayed care in U.S. adults and the impacts of Medicaid expansion on mortality and find that the savings channel dominates and is roughly twice as large as the mortality channel. A policy that gradually phases in insurance coverage for the elderly is more cost-effective, reducing mortality by substantially more per dollar spent, but is more limited in scope.

"Macroeconomic Effects of "Free" Secondary Schooling in the Developing World" with Junichi Fujimoto and David Lagakos, March 2023

This paper studies the macroeconomic effects of publicly funded ('free') secondary schooling in the

developing world. Our analysis is based on an over-lapping generations model of human capital accumulation that we estimate to match experimental evidence on the effects of scholarships for poor but talented students in Ghana. The model predicts that nationwide free secondary schooling increases average education levels but reduces GDP per capita in the long run. The human capital gains from free schooling in the model are offset by lost income during schooling years, negative selection of new students, and reductions in fertility by high-ability households.

"Active Labor Market Policies in General Equilibrium: Crowd-In or Crowd-Out", January 2023

Recent empirical work has shown that high search costs may contribute to the low levels of wage work in many developing countries, but the aggregate effects of job search assistance are unclear. Greatly increasing the number of searchers without an equivalent increase in the number of jobs could lead to substantial crowd-out effects and limit the effectiveness of such policies in promoting employment. Conversely, making it easier for firms to find qualified workers could reduce the cost of hiring and grow the wage sector, crowding in additional workers and accelerating the process of structural transformation. Which effect dominates is crucial in understanding the effectiveness of job search assistance at an aggregate level. I examine this question using a two-sector general equilibrium search model with a frictional wage sector and frictionless traditional sector. The model allows for both crowd-in and crowd-out effects, but neither effect dominates in general. I estimate the key model parameters using the simulated method of moments to match the results of an experiment that provided job search subsidies to job seekers in Ethiopia. Using the estimated model, I evaluate the impact of implementing a job search subsidy for the all households. I find that the crowd-out effect dominates. Ignoring equilibrium adjustment, the percent of households engaging in wage employment increases from 31 to 51 percent; however, after accounting for the adjustment in labor market tightness, wage employment only increases to 38 percent. The welfare gains follow a similar pattern. In partial equilibrium, the policy results in a gain of welfare equivalent to 1.2 percent of consumption which falls to only 0.6 in general equilibrium. These results suggest that job search assistance alone is limited in its ability to move workers into the wage sector and may benefit from being accompanied by policies aimed at increasing the number of jobs posted by firms.

"How Should Policy Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic Differ in the Developing World?" with Titan Alon, Minki Kim, and David Lagakos, June 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has already led to dramatic policy responses in most advanced economies, and in particular sustained lockdowns matched with sizable transfers to much of the workforce. This paper provides a preliminary quantitative analysis of how aggregate policy responses should differ in developing countries. To do so we build an incomplete-markets macroeconomic model with epidemiological dynamics that features several of the main economic and demographic distinctions between advanced and developing economies relevant for the pandemic. We focus in particular on differences in population structure, fiscal capacity, healthcare capacity, the prevalence of "hand-to-mouth" households, and the size of the informal sector. The model predicts that blanket lockdowns are generally less effective in developing countries at reducing the welfare costs of the pandemic, saving fewer lives per unit of lost GDP. Age-specific lockdown policies, on the other hand, may be even more potent in developing countries, saving more lives per unit of lost output than in advanced economies.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

"Labor Market Frictions, Firm Growth, and TFP"

"An Envelope Condition Algorithm for Solving Non-Concave Value Functions with Occasionally Binding Constraints"

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TEACHING

As Instructor:

Data Analytics for the Social Sciences, 2018, 2019

Probability and Statistics (Supplementary Lectures for MBAs), 2022, 2023

As Teaching Assistant:

Graduate Macroeconomics A, 2017

Macroeconomics A, 2017

Macroeconomics B, 2021

Principles of Macroeconomics, 2020, 2021

Principles of Microeconomics, 2017

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITES

Presentations

2023: ASSA Annual Meeting, University of Connecticut, SED Annual Meeting, YRISE Annual Conference,

2022: NBER SI, University of Minnesota 3E Reading Group, Midwest Macro, NEUDC

2021: SED Annual Meeting, LAEF Welfare & Inequality in the 21st Century, The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Junior Scholar Conference

Referee Service

European Economic Review, Review of Economic Dynamics, Journal of Development Economics, World Bank Economic Review, Journal of Macroeconomics

Consulting

Inter-American Development Bank (2020)

OTHER INFORMATION

Citizenship: United States