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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics, The University of Texas at Austin	May 2024 (Expected)
M.A. in Economics, Seoul National University	August 2018
B.A. in Economics with <i>Summa Cum Laude</i> , Seoul National University	August 2013

RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary: Public Economics, Labor Economics, and Health Economics
Secondary: Education Economics

REFERENCES

Marika Cabral (Primary)	Richard Murphy	Cody Tuttle
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JOB MARKET PAPER

Every Year Counts: The Long-Run Consequences of Pregnancy Timing among Teenagers

Abstract: While the teen pregnancy rate is high in the US relative to other countries, a notable change has occurred, with these pregnancies shifting toward later teenage years. However, little is known about the consequences of pregnancy timing among teenagers. This paper seeks to fill that gap in the literature by studying the effects of pregnancy timing among teenagers aged 15–18 on their short- and long-run educational and labor market outcomes. Specifically, I estimate the marginal impact of a one-year difference in pregnancy timing for each age interval—15–16, 16–17, and 17–18—leveraging linked administrative data from Texas. To identify the effect of pregnancy timing, this paper examines both within-individual changes in outcomes surrounding pregnancy and across-individual comparisons in outcomes after pregnancy, among matched individuals who are balanced on a wide range of characteristics but differ in the timing of pregnancy. The results indicate that experiencing pregnancy one year earlier increases absences and the likelihood of leaving school, particularly during the postpartum year. Further, the results indicate that becoming pregnant one year earlier has adverse long-term consequences: it reduces high school graduation by age 20, decreases college enrollment and completion in the early 20s, and leads to lower employment and earnings in the mid-20s, with these detrimental effects being most pronounced for the youngest group. Finally, I present suggestive evidence that providing parental support to teenage mothers during the postpartum year could mitigate the short-term disruptions they face, such as increased absences and higher dropout rates.

WORKING PAPERS

Partial Outsourcing of Public Programs: Evidence on Determinants of Choice in Medicare

(with Marika Cabral and Colleen Carey), NBER Working Paper # 31141

Abstract: Many public programs let individuals choose between publicly provided benefits and a subsidized private alternative. We investigate the determinants of health insurance choice in Medicare—a setting with vast geographic variation in the share of individuals selecting the public option versus private alternative. We analyze insurance decisions among individuals who move to quantify the relative importance of individual-specific factors (such as preferences or income) and place-specific factors (such as local health insurance options) on insurance decisions. We find roughly 40% of the geographic variation in the share selecting private coverage is due to place-based factors, while the remainder is explained by individuals. Our findings highlight the importance of individual factors in these decisions and may inform discussions about the use of policy to address geographic disparities.

PUBLICATIONS

Do Mandated Health Insurance Benefits for Diabetes Save Lives?

Journal of Public Economics, 2022, Vol.216(104762)

Abstract: In response to the growing concern over diabetes, state-mandated health insurance benefits for diabetes have become popular since the late 1990s. However, little is known about whether these mandates improve the health of people with diabetes. In this paper, I use data from the restricted-use Multiple Cause of Death Mortality database and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to investigate the effects of these mandates on diabetes-related mortality rates, along with the underlying mechanisms behind the estimated effects. Using a difference-in-differences framework that leverages variation in the enactment of mandates both across states and over time, I find that approximately 3.1 fewer diabetes-related deaths per 100,000 occur annually in mandate states than in non-mandate states. The mechanism analysis suggests higher utilization of the mandated medical benefits caused these mortality improvements. These findings can inform the ongoing policy debate on strengthening or weakening coverage mandates, including Essential Health Benefits under the Affordable Care Act.

Living Environments and Child Development: Comparing Two Groups of Out-of-Home Children

Journal of Human Capital, 2021, Vol.15(2), p.346–371

(with Ick-Joong Chung, Jungmin Lee, Yasuyuki Sawada, and Seung-Gyu Sim)

Abstract: Using unique data on 210 Korean children from surveys and experiments, this paper examines whether living environments matter for child development. We compare two groups of out-of-home children in different environments: traditional orphanage-type institutions and family-like group homes. We exploit the arguably random assignment of children to institutions, generated by variation in the relative availability of group homes across regions over the years. We find that children in group homes are more altruistic, emotionally stable, satisfied with school, and forward-looking. Our findings suggest that family-like environments with fewer coresidents and more intimate relationships are beneficial to children separated from their parents.

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

Save the Truth from Selection Bias: Revisiting the Effects of Attending a Pregnancy School

[Part of Texas ERC Project # UTA 206]

Teacher Retirement and Student Achievement: Evidence from Texas Administrative Data

[Part of Texas ERC Project # UTA 170]

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (* Denotes Scheduled)

- 2023 Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) Conference*; Southern Economic Association (SEA) Annual Conference*; STATA Texas Empirical Microeconomics Conference
- 2022 American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) Conference, Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) Conference
- 2021 Asian & Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference
- 2018 The 8th International Conference of Panel Study on Korean Children

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for Prof. Marika Cabral, The University of Texas at Austin	2020–2023
Research Assistant for Prof. Jungmin Lee, Seoul National University	2016–2018
Research Assistant for Prof. Sam Hwang, The University of British Columbia	2016–2018

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, The University of Texas at Austin

Introduction to Labor Economics	2020, 2023
Introduction to Econometrics (x 2)	2019
Introduction to Microeconomics	2018, 2020, 2023

Teaching Assistant, Seoul National University

Principle of Economics 1 (x 3)	2016, 2017
Labor Economics	2016

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Summer Research Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin	2023
Graduate School Continuing Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin	2021–2022
Best Second Year Paper Award, Dept. of Economics, The University of Texas at Austin	2020
Supplemental Fellowship, Dept. of Economics, The University of Texas at Austin	2018–2020
Graduate Student Fellowship, Seoul National University	2016–2017

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee Service: *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*

TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

Software: Stata, Matlab, Python, R, \LaTeX

Language: English (fluent), Korean (native)

Citizenship: Republic of Korea (F1-visa)

Last Updated: October, 12th, 2023