

Melissa K. Spencer

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EDUCATION

University of Virginia, Charlottesville

Ph.D. in Economics

Expected May 2021

Advisors: Amalia Miller, Eric Chyn, Sebastian Tello-Trillo

University of Virginia, Charlottesville

M.A. in Economics

December 2016

Clemson University, Clemson

B.A. in Economics, *summa cum laude*

May 2015

B.A. in Women's Leadership, *summa cum laude*

May 2015

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Health, Gender, Crime

WORKING PAPERS

“Safer Sex? The Effect of AIDS Risk on Birth Rates” (Job Market Paper)

The emergence of AIDS in the 1980s dramatically increased the cost of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Prior research shows that people responded to the AIDS epidemic by switching to sexual behaviors and contraceptive methods with lower likelihood of AIDS transmission. These behavioral adjustments also affect the likelihood of pregnancy and the incidence of other STIs. This paper provides the first evidence that the AIDS epidemic in the United States increased the birth rate and the abortion rate, and decreased the gonorrhea rate. I show that births among adult women increased on average by 0.5 births per 1,000 women per year, for a total of 330,000 additional births between 1981 and 2001 due to AIDS avoidance behaviors. My analysis suggests that the overall estimates are driven by women who avoid AIDS by shifting to monogamous relationships.

“Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Domestic Violence in Los Angeles”

with Amalia Miller (UVA) and Carmit Segal (University of Zurich)

NBER Working Paper w28068.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“The Effect of Tasers on Fatal Police Encounters”

“The Effect of Abortion Restrictions on Maternal Inputs,” with Rebecca Brough (Notre Dame)

“Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Domestic Violence in US Cities,”

with Amalia Miller (UVA) and Carmit Segal (University of Zurich)

AWARDS AND GRANTS

NBER Gender in the Economy Study Group Research Grant on Women, Victimization, and COVID-19 (with Amalia Miller and Carmit Segal)	2020
Bankard Pre-doctoral Fellowship	2020
Marshall Jevons Fund Award	2020
The Jefferson Fellowship (UVA's premier graduate fellowship)	2018
Jefferson Scholars Foundation Research Fund	2018
Snively Prize for Outstanding Economics Dissertation Proposal	2018
Huskey Graduate Research Exhibition, Best Social Sciences Poster	2018
Snively Prize for Outstanding Economics Summer Paper	2017

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & INVITED SEMINARS

Virtual Seminar on the Economics of Risky Health Behaviors	2021
Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting	2020
University of Toledo Economics seminar	2020
St. Olaf College Economics seminar	2020
SITE Economic Perspectives on Domestic Violence	2020
NBER Summer Institute Gender in the Economy Egg-Timer with Amalia Miller (presenter) and Carmit Segal	2020

INVITED WORKSHOPS

IWPR Economics of Reproductive Health working group (cancelled due to COVID-19)	2020
Becker-Friedman Institute Price Theory Summer Camp	2019
Summit for Diversity in Economics	2018

SERVICE GRANTS

UVA Diversity and Inclusion Grant for Women in Economics	2019
Jefferson Foundation Grant for Interdisciplinary Forums	2019
CSWEP Joan Haworth Mentoring Grant for Women in Economics at UVA	2018
Bankard Conference Award for Economics Graduate Student Workshop	2017

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor for ECON 3010: Intermediate Microeconomics	Summer 2018
TA for ECON 4160: Economics of Health	Spring 2018
TA for ECON 3010: Intermediate Microeconomics	Summer 2017, Fall 2017
TA for ECON 2020: Principles of Macroeconomics	Spring 2017
TA for ECON 2010: Principles of Microeconomics	Fall 2016

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES & SERVICE

President and founder of Women in Economics at UVA	Fall 2019 - Spring 2020
Co-organizer of the Academics and Social Media Forum	Spring 2019 - Fall 2019
Graduate School Student Council Vice President	Fall 2018 - May 2019
Graduate School Student Council Initiatives Committee Chair	Fall 2017 - May 2018
Selections Co-chair for The Raven Society	Fall 2018 - May 2019
Chief organizer of the Bankard Economics Graduate Student Workshop	Fall 2017 - May 2018

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Tomorrow's Professors Today at UVA Center for Teaching Excellence, Phi Beta Kappa