

Reducing Racial Disparities through Experience: Evidence from Medical Device Choice in Cardiac Catheterization Labs

Presenter: Chad Stecher, Arizona State University

Discussant: Ian McCarthy, Emory University and NBER
ASHEcon Annual Meeting, June 28, 2022

Racial disparities in health care

- Lower life expectancy of more than 4 years for non-Hispanic Black Americans versus White Americans
- More than 6 years in 2020
- What can health care policy do to shrink this gap?
 - Race concordance
 - Outright discrimination
 - *Implicit bias* (where this paper fits?)

This paper

Main Question: Does experience with Black patients reduce the racial gap in DES use?

Approach: LPM regression of DES use (separately by race) against different measures of experience

Unique data on team construction!

Some high-level thoughts

Learning differentially by race?

- Other evidence that physicians learn differentially by the race of the patient?
- Consistent with implicit bias, but haven't seen in a learning context
 - Maybe related to Sarsons, **Interpreting Signals in the Labor Market: Evidence from Medical Referrals**
- Role of implicit bias could work in different directions, depending on strength of priors and early experience

Who is learning?

- Hard to think about team learning in this context
- Specialist seems to make the decision of whether to use DES