Coupled models of structured contagion processes in human-environment systems

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First Project

Background

- Population beliefs about the usage of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) can have a major effective on the epidemic landscape
- Population age distribution is a key factor in both NPI usage and COVID-19 mortality
- Vaccine rollout important to reducing mortality in the long term (Bubar et al., 2020; Buckner, Chowell, and Springborn, 2020)

Outline of project

1. Describe age-structured compartmental model of COVID-19 infection in a population, coupled to model of social distancing dynamics.
2. Fit model to data from Ontario, Canada
3. Evaluate outcomes from different vaccination strategies, comparing vaccination of vulnerable populations vs vaccination of susceptible populations

Compartmental model overview

Disease Compartments

$S_i(t)$: Susceptible

$S_{2,i}(t)$: Vaccinated but still susceptible

$V_i(t)$: Vaccinated and immune

$E_i(t)$: Exposed

$P_i(t)$: Pre-symptomatic

$I_{a,i}(T)$: Infectious and asymptomatic

$I_{s,i}(t)$: Infectious and symptomatic

$R_i(t)$: Recovered

where $i = 1 \ldots 16$ comprises age structure

Social compartments

$x(t)$: Uses NPIs

$1 - x(t)$: Does not use NPIs

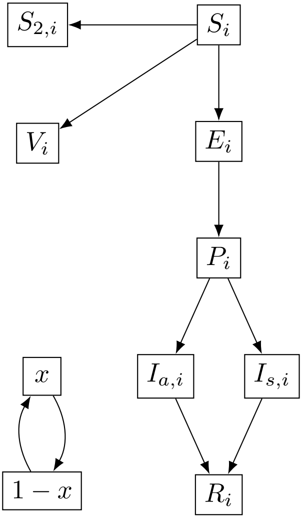


Figure: Compartments

Vaccination strategies

We compare four vaccination strategies

- > 60 first
- < 20 first
- Uniform
- Contact-based

with respect to reduction in cumulative mortality after 5 years.

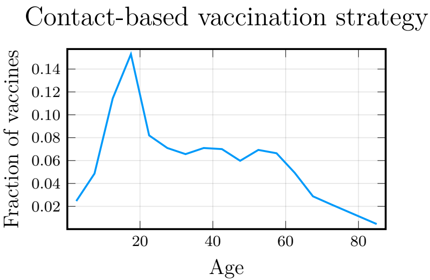
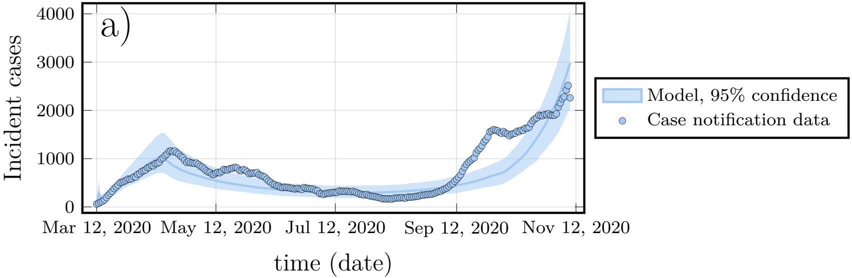
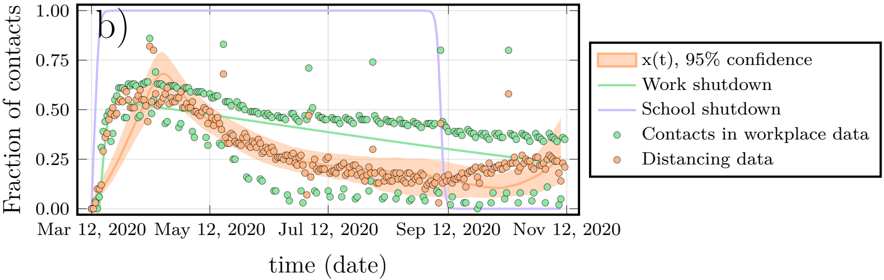


Figure: The contact-based strategy is the normalized leading eigenvector of the sum of the contact matrices

Parameterization





Results

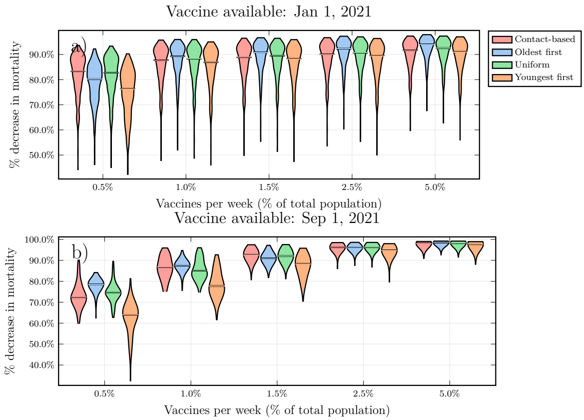
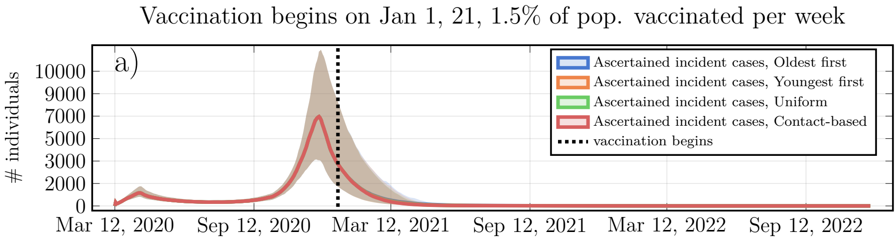
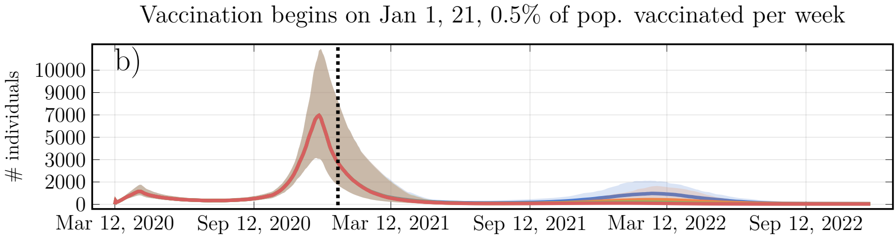
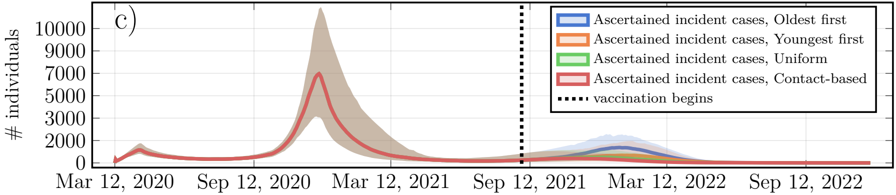


Figure: Percentage reduction in cumulative mortality due to COVID-19 after 5 years with respect to psi, expressed as a percentage of the total population per week. Here $v_{D_i} = v_{T_i} = 0.75$, shutdown at 200% of first wave. Percentage reductions are relative to no vaccination.

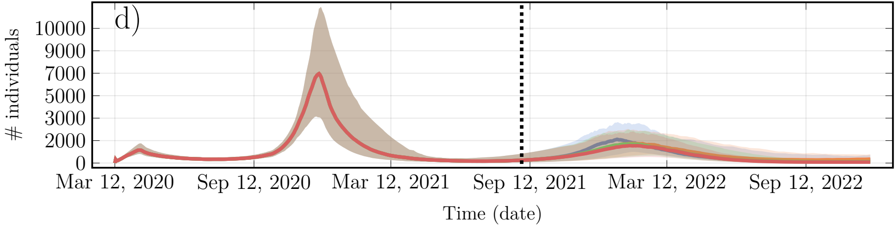

Vaccination begins on Jan 1, 21, 1.5% of pop. vaccinated per week
a)
individuals
10000
9000
7000
5000
3000
2000
0
Mar 12, 2020
Sep 12, 2020
Mar 12, 2021
Sep 12, 2021
Mar 12, 2022
Sep 12, 2022
Ascertained incident cases, Oldest first
Ascertained incident cases, Youngest first
Ascertained incident cases, Uniform
Ascertained incident cases, Contact-based
vaccination begins


Vaccination begins on Jan 1, 21, 0.5% of pop. vaccinated per week
b)
individuals
10000
9000
7000
5000
3000
2000
0
Mar 12, 2020
Sep 12, 2020
Mar 12, 2021
Sep 12, 2021
Mar 12, 2022
Sep 12, 2022

Vaccination begins on Sep 1, 21, 1.5% of pop. vaccinated per week



Vaccination begins on Sep 1, 21, 0.5% of pop. vaccinated per week



Results

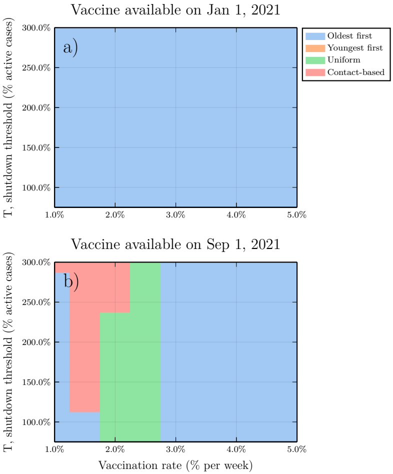


Figure: Each parameter pair is colored according to the strategy that prevents most deaths on average, over all realizations of the model.

Results

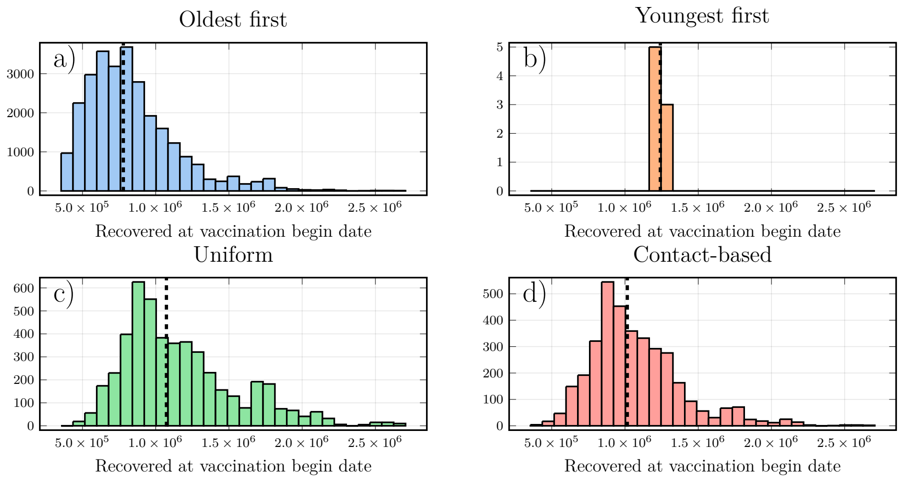


Figure: Histogram of no. recovered at vaccination begin date, according to best strategy for that realization, over all parameter values in sensitivity analysis. Vertical lines are the median.

Chapter Conclusion

- We described an age structured compartmental model of Sars-CoV-2 infection and vaccination coupled to a social model
- Showed that sometimes transmission interrupting strategies can be more effective
- Depends on the pre-existing immunity in the population

Second Project

Project 2

- Invasive forest pests cause incredible damage to ecosystems and lumber resources
- Evidence shows that movement of firewood is a major long distance vector (Koch et al. (2014))
- Education and awareness is a major way we try to reduce this vector

Figure: an Emerald Ash Borer, which devastated Ash populations in North America

Outline of project

1. Adapt a model such as Barlow et al. (2014) to a larger, more realistic network
2. Use model to compare three possible prevention measures
   - Education/awareness
   - Inspection of moved firewood
   - Quarantine of highly susceptible forest patches
3. Assess measures across a range of parameter values and time horizons

Model

$$\frac{dS_i}{dt} = \underbrace{rS_i\left(1 - \frac{(S_i + I_i)}{K}\right)}_{\text{Logistic Growth Of Forest}} - \underbrace{AS_i(I_i + B_i)\theta_k(I_i - I_a)}_{\text{Infestation term}} \tag{1}$$

$$\frac{dI_i}{dt} = \underbrace{-\gamma I_i}_{\substack{\text{Death of}\\ \text{infested trees}}} + \underbrace{AS_i(I_i + B_i)\theta_k(I_i - I_a)}_{\text{Susceptibles become infested}} \underbrace{- d\sum_{j=1, j\neq i}^{N} P_{j,i}(1 - C_e)(1 - L_i)I_i}_{\substack{\text{Total infested wood}\\ \text{leaving due to transport}}} \tag{2}$$

$$\frac{dB_i}{dt} = \underbrace{-\gamma B_i}_{\text{Decay of firewood}} \underbrace{+ d\sum_{j=1, j\neq i}^{N} P_{i,j}(1 - C_e)(1 - L_j)I_j}_{\text{Import of fallen wood}} \tag{3}$$

$$\frac{dL_i}{dt} = \sigma L_i(1 - L_i)(\underbrace{U}_{\substack{\text{Net cost to}\\ \text{transport firewood}}} + \underbrace{s(2L_i - 1)}_{\text{Social influence term}} + \underbrace{fI_i}_{\text{Impact of infestation}}) \tag{4}$$

We use $T_i(t)$, computed from equation 5 to be the total number of infested trees in patch i up to time t.

$$\frac{dT_i}{dt} = AS_i(I_i + B_i)\theta_k(I_i - I_a) \tag{5}$$

Define $T(t) = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} T_i(t)$ to be the average total number of infested trees up to t.

Data

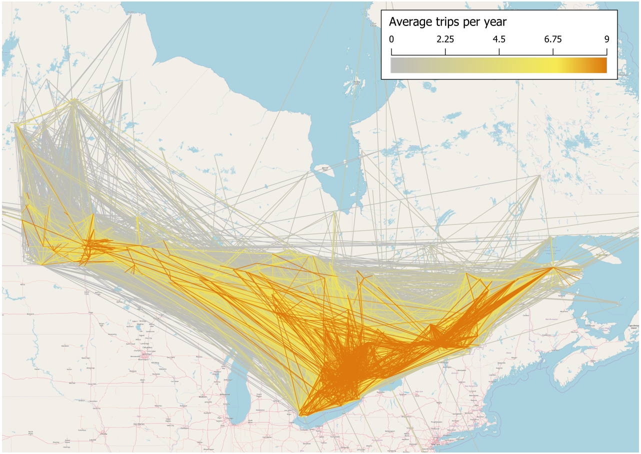


Figure: Travel network used to weight edges in firewood transport network

Results

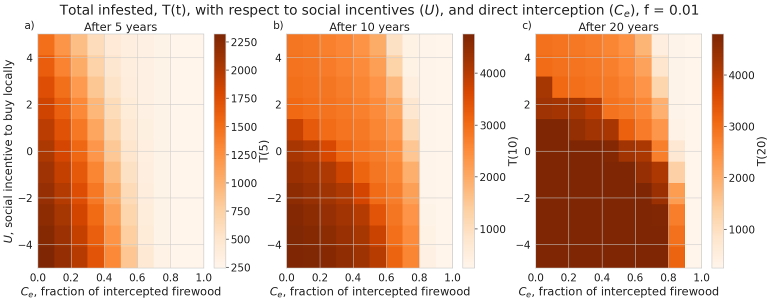


Figure: Total number of infested trees per node over 5 (a), 10 (b), and 20 (c) years

Results

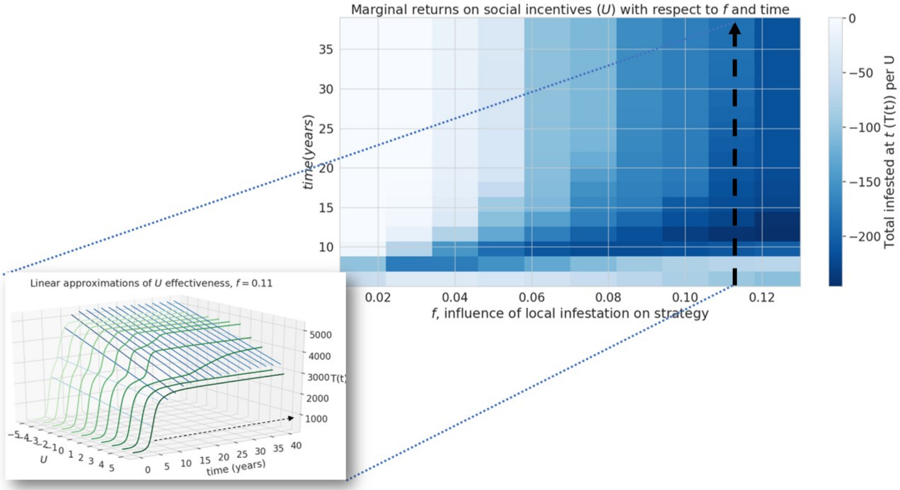


Figure: Efficacy of social incentives on infestation after time T. Inset graph shows an example of cross-section along the line $f = 0.11$

Results

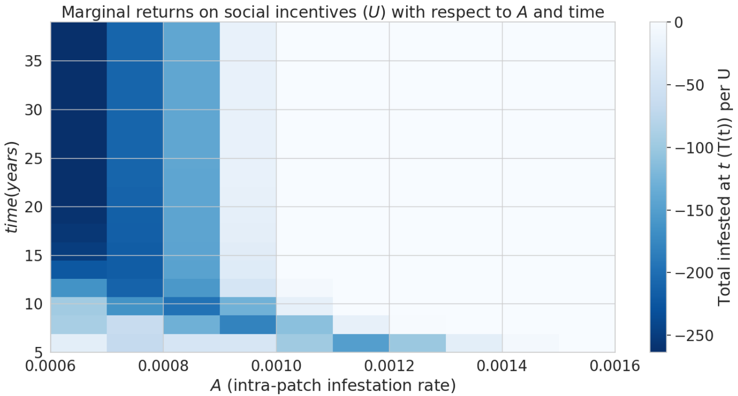


Figure: Efficacy of social incentives on infestation after time period T with respect to A, the intra-patch infestation parameter.

Results

Figure: Efficacy of social incentives on infestation after time T intra-patch spreading rate A, affects infestation outcomes.

Results

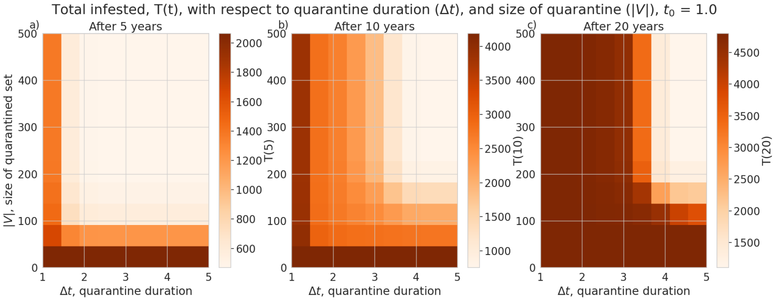


Figure: Average total infested trees ($T(t)$) after 5, 10 and 15 years (panels a), b), and c) respectively), assuming the quarantine begins one year after the pest is introduced.

Discussion

- Firewood inspection not likely to be effective in implementation
- Education, represented as social incentives, are able to decrease infection in the short term, but dependent on pest-specific parameters
- Patch quarantine can be effective if sufficiently many patches are isolated, and the pest is detected early

Third Project

Background

- Wildfire and bark beetles are disturbances integral to coniferous forest ecosystems in the western cordillera of North America (Kaufmann et al., 2008)
- Bark beetle outbreaks have always been destructive, but seem to be worse in recent decades
- Literature on causal relationship between bark beetle outbreaks and wildfire is extensive but inconclusive (Axelson, Alfaro, and Hawkes (2009))
- Existing modelling of these two coupled disturbances is sparse

Project Outline

- Extend existing model of Duncan et al. (2015) to include wildfires
- Explore parameter regime of extended model
- Introduce forest stand thinning procedures to reduce MPB outbreaks
- Show that these stand thinning procedures are able to work due to increased stand heterogeneity

Model

$$j_{n+1,1} = dJ_n + I_{n-2} + F_n \tag{6a}$$

$$j_{n+1,k} = (1-d)j_{n,k-1} - \frac{\alpha_1}{T}P_n j_{n,k-1}, \qquad k = 2...K-1, K \tag{6b}$$

$$S_{n+1} = S_n + (1-d)j_{n,K} - \left(I_n + \frac{\alpha_2}{T}P_n I_n\right) - \frac{\alpha_2}{T}P_n\left(S_n + (1-d)j_{n,K}\right) - \sigma_F\gamma_n \tag{6c}$$

$$I_{n+1} = r_1 I_n e^{-\beta_1(T-S_{n+1})} - \frac{\alpha_2}{T}P_n I_n + \sigma_I\xi_n \tag{6d}$$

$$F_{n+1} = P_n\left[\frac{\alpha_1}{T}\sum_{k=1}^{K-1} j_{n,k} + \frac{\alpha_2}{T}\left(S_n + (1-d)j_{n,K}\right) + \frac{\alpha_2}{T}I_n\right] + \sigma_F\gamma_n \tag{6e}$$

$$P_n = T - \sum_{i=1}^{n} F_i e^{-\kappa(n-i)} \tag{6f}$$

Results

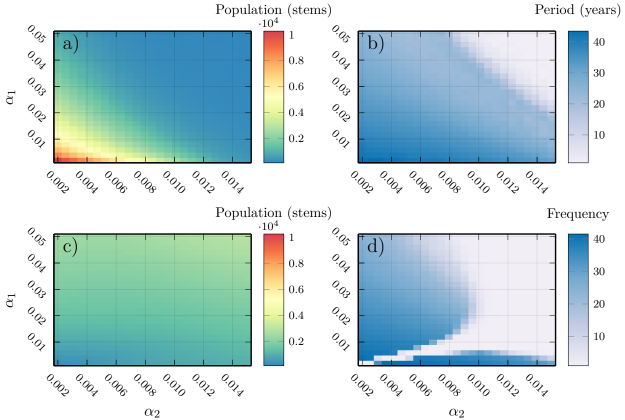


Figure: Panels: a) Average size of largest MPB population, b) Average frequency of MPB outbreaks, c) Average size of largest fire season, d) Average frequency of severe fire seasons. All measured at equilibrium.

Results

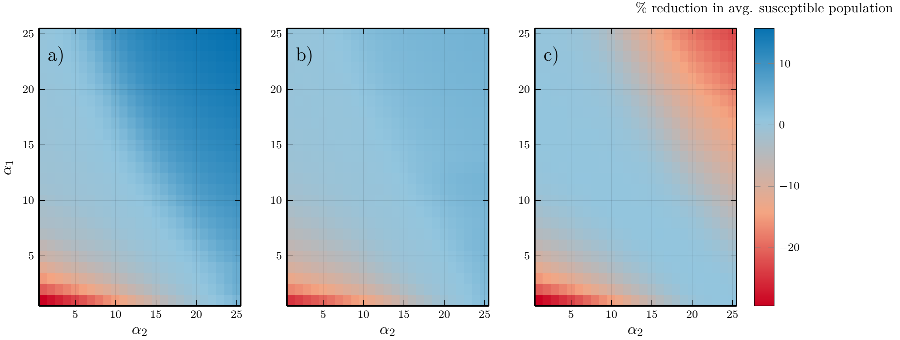


Figure: Percentage change in average susceptible (mature) forest population compared to no FTP with a) $\tau = 0.15, m = 8$, b) with $\tau = 0.15, m = 8$ applied every 5 years, c) controlled burning with $\tau = 0.15, m = 8$, with respect to burning rates α_1, α_2.

Results

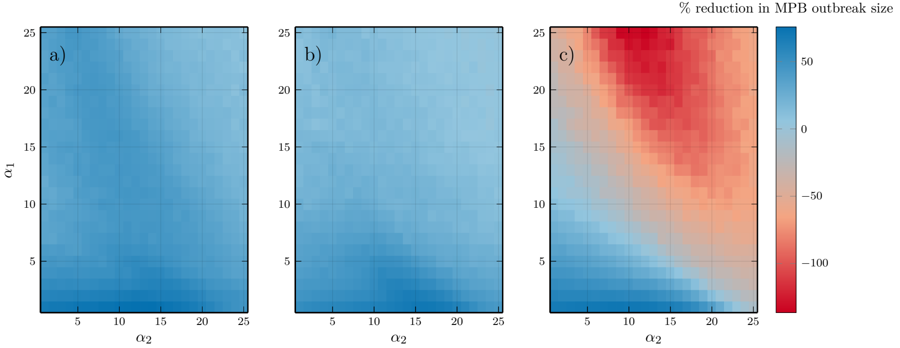


Figure: Percentage change in maximum MPB infestation size within 500 year period under FTP with a) $\tau = 0.15, m = 8$, b) with $\tau = 0.15, m = 8$ applied every 5 years, c) controlled burning with $\tau = 0.15, m = 8$, with respect to burning rates α_1, α_2.

Chapter Conclusion

- We show that increasing fire prevalence is able to dampen MPB outbreaks by increasing stand heterogeneity
- Stand heterogeneity can also be increased through forest thinning or prescribed burning, which also dampens MPB outbreaks.
- These results are consistent with ecological evidence (Seidl et al. (2016) and Kaufmann et al. (2008))

Overall conclusion

- Chapter 1: developed a disease-behaviour model of COVID-19 to address questions about vaccine prioritization
- Chapter 2: we used a socio-ecological model of forest pest spread to compare the efficacy of measures to prevent invasive pest spread
- Chapter 3: we created a model of coupled MPB and wildfire dynamics to shed light on the stand dynamics of this ecosystem

Thank you!

Axelson, Jodi N, René I Alfaro, and Brad C Hawkes (2009). "Influence of fire and mountain pine beetle on the dynamics of lodgepole pine stands in British Columbia, Canada". In: *Forest Ecology and Management* 257.9, pp. 1874–1882.

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Buckner, Jack H, Gerardo H Chowell, and Michael R Springborn (2020). "Optimal Dynamic Prioritization of Scarce COVID-19 Vaccines". In: *medRxiv*.

Duncan, Jacob P et al. (2015). "A model for mountain pine beetle outbreaks in an age-structured forest: Predicting severity and outbreak-recovery cycle period". In: *Bulletin of mathematical biology* 77.7, pp. 1256–1284.

Kaufmann, Merrill R et al. (2008). “The status of our scientific understanding of lodgepole pine and mountain pine beetles: a focus on forest ecology and fire behavior”. In.

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Seidl, Rupert et al. (2016). “Spatial variability in tree regeneration after wildfire delays and dampens future bark beetle outbreaks”. In: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, p. 201615263.