## STEVEN ZHENG

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#### EDUCATION

#### Columbia University and New York University

New York, NY PhD coursework in Finance and Economics 2018 - 2019

Washington, DC 2016 - 2018

2012-2016

BS Mathematics and Economics NCAA Division I swim team member

Georgetown University

MS Mathematics

University of British Columbia Dual-enrollment during high school

Vancouver, Canada 2011 - 2012

Research Interests Asset pricing and macroeconomics

## Working Papers

# The Value of a Cure: An Asset Pricing Perspective

(with Viral Acharya, Timothy Johnson and Suresh Sundaresan)

We provide an estimate of the value of a cure using the joint behavior of stock prices and a vaccine progress indicator during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our indicator is based on the chronology of stage-by-stage progress of individual vaccines and related news. We construct a general equilibrium regime-switching model of repeated pandemics and stages of vaccine progress wherein the representative agent withdraws labor and alters consumption endogenously to mitigate health risk. The value of a cure in the resulting asset-pricing framework is intimately linked to the relative labor supply across states. The observed stock market response to vaccine progress serves to identify this quantity, allowing us to use the model to estimate the economy-wide welfare gain that would be attributable to a cure. In our estimation, and with standard preference parameters, the value of the ability to end the pandemic is worth 5-15% of total wealth. This value rises substantially when there is uncertainty about the frequency and duration of pandemics. Agents place almost as much value on the ability to resolve the uncertainty as they do on the value of the cure itself. This effect is stronger – not weaker – when agents have a preference for later resolution of uncertainty. The policy implication is that understanding the fundamental biological and social determinants of future pandemics may be as important as resolving the immediate crisis.

## Work in Progress

## **Hedging Uncertainty**

I estimate the price of hedging against uncertainty shocks. I use macro and financial uncertainty from Jurado, Ludvigson and Ng (2015), and start by employing their and Bloom (2009)'s vector autoregression (VAR) to show shocks to both types of uncertainty result in sharp and persistent declines across the market portfolio and real economic quantities. I then construct hedge portfolios following Herskovic, Moreira and Muir (2020). While they show standard risk factors can be successfully hedged with minimal cost, I find that hedging against uncertainty shocks requires an economically meaningful cost of 3 to 4\% per year. Finally I estimate an uncertainty factor and the resulting mimicking portfolio outperforms in times of heightened uncertainty.

Research New York University New York, NY EXPERIENCE

Research assistant for Viral Acharya, Toomas Laarits, Robert Richmond 2019 - 2021

BlackRock New York, NY Macro Research 2018 - 2019

JP Morgan New York, NY

Interest Rate Derivatives Research

Goldman Sachs New York, NY Global Macro Research 2016

Teaching Probability Theory and Applications (MS)  ${\bf Georgetown}$ EXPERIENCE Teaching assistant for David Caraballo 2016

> Economic Statistics (Undergraduate)  ${\bf Georgetown}$

> Teaching assistant for Anil Nathan 2016

> International Trade (Undergraduate) Georgetown 2014 - 2015Teaching assistant for Carol Rogers

> > Updated April 2021

2017