

VIKAS PD GAWAI

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EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ph.D., Ag and Applied Economics (AAE)	<i>Expected 2024</i>
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Masters of Economics	<i>2016-18</i>
University of Mumbai, India, Bachelor of Technology, Civil Engineering	<i>2004-08</i>

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Health, Aging, Social Security, Public Policy, Human Capital, Caste (Race), Gender, Agriculture, Broadband

JOB MARKET PAPER

- Does High-Speed Internet (Broadband) Technology Affect the Mental Health of Older Adults? (*Presentations - MEA (March '23), American University (May '23), SEA (Nov '23), APPAM (Nov '23)*); Popular Media Highlight: GROW MAGAZINE cover story

Abstract- Recent research has shown important negative effects of social networks on younger people's mental health. Yet, we do not know if the same effects are present across the population, particularly for older adults, who are especially vulnerable to certain mental health conditions. I estimate the effect of broadband internet access on the mental health of older adults (aged 50+) in the United States, using individual panel data and recent advances in difference-in-differences (DID) methods for staggered rollouts of treatment. In contrast to the literature that finds nefarious effects of the internet among younger populations, my results show that broadband rollout significantly reduces depression symptoms by 5.7% among older adults. The results show that an increase in social connectedness and a decline in social isolation are the primary mechanisms driving these positive effects. Improved health literacy and technological efficiency (telehealth) also partly drive the results. I also find important heterogeneity by gender and geography, with rural dwellers and women being the biggest beneficiaries of broadband's positive effects on mental health. The magnitudes of my estimates of the impact of broadband access are comparable with other major life events known to affect the mental health of older adults, such as job loss, recession, and the death of a spouse. These results highlight the significant benefits of broadband for the mental health of older adults and suggest an unmeasured additional benefit to public investments in broadband infrastructure.

WORKING PAPERS

- Discrimination in Science: Salaries of Foreign and US Born Land-Grant University Scientists *with Jeremy Foltz (Revise and Resubmit)* (*Presentation - AAEEA (August '22)*)
- Early-Life Economic Conditions and Old-Age Mortality: Evidence from Historical County-Level Bank Deposit Data, *with Valentina Duque, Jason Fletcher, Hamid Noghanibehambari, Lauren Schmitz- (Revise and Resubmit)*
- The Effect of Early Life Exposures to the Green Revolution (agricultural technology) on Later Life Aging Outcomes: Evidence from the Largest Aging Data *with Lauren Schmitz, Valentina Duque, Jinkook Lee, Hunter Green (presented at APPAM)*
- Spillover Effects of a Bicycle Policy on Girls' Enrollment in Middle Schools (*Recognition under Best Paper Scholarship (Honorable mention), Dept. of Economics, UW-Madison, 2018*)
- The Effect of Teacher Hiring Policy on Student Test Scores: A Multiple Regression Discontinuity Design Approach for one of the Largest Public School Systems in the World (*selected at American Education Finance and Policy conference*)

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

The effect of Broadband Technology on Social Security Disability Insurance Enrollment (*Competitive award from Retirement and Disability Research Center (RDRC) Center for Financial Security (CFS), Social Security Administration (SSA)*)

Effect of Green Revolution on the Intergenerational Human Capital *with Valentina Duque, Lauren Schmitz (presented at PAA)*

Spatially Varying Gender and Caste Inequalities in Cognition and the Contribution of Individual and State-level Characteristics Across India *with Lauren Schmitz, Kanika Arora, and Shubhashrita Basu*

COMPETITIVE HONORS

-**Diversity Fellow**, School of Public Affairs, American University 2023-
-**Research Fellow**, Retirement and Disability Research Center (RDRC) Center for Financial Security (CFS), Social Security Administration (SSA) 2022-
-**DEI- Diversity Scholarship** American Society of Health Economics (ASHEcon) 2021
-**Best Research Paper Scholarship (Honorable mention)** Dept. of Economics, UW Madison 2018

COMPETITIVE GRANTS AND AWARDS

Center for Demography of Health and Aging **Research Travel** Award- \$2,000 2023
RDRC - Junior Scholar **Research Competition** Award- \$5,000 2022-23
Prof. Jeremy Foltz **Research Travel** Award- \$1,100 2023
Deborah and David Penn Fund - **Research Presentation** Award- \$500, \$1000 2022, 23
UW-Madison- Graduate School - **Research Presentation** Award- \$2,500, \$1,500 2022, 23
UW-Madison- CDE **Research Presentation** Award- \$950 2022
UW-Madison- Traisman Agribusiness **Graduate Fellowship**- \$750 2021
UW-Madison Student Research Grants Competition **Research Travel**- \$1,500 2020
UW Madison Graduate Student **Summer Fieldwork** Award- \$3,000 2019
Indian State Government Scholarship for Masters in Economics- \$100,000 2016-18

ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

-Graduate Student, Center for Demography of Health and Aging (CDHA), and Center for Demography and Ecology(CDE) 2019–Current
-Graduate Student, Institute of Research on Poverty (IRP) 2021-2022
-Graduate Student, Center for South Asia, (CSA) 2020–

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Midwest Economics Association (MEA) 2023
Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) 2022
Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) 2022, 23
Population Association of America (PAA) 2022
Southern Economics Association (SEA) 2023

LEADERSHIP, MENTORSHIP

UW-Madison, *Mentor for two undergrad students on a class project under Prof. Foltz* Spring 2022
UW-Madison First Generation (**FirstGen**), *Mentor for one FirstGen undergrad student* 2022
UW-Madison, AAE, *Mentor for one FirstGen undergrad student* 2022
UW-Madison First Generation (**FirstGen**), *Member* 2021–
UW-Madison CHDA NextGen Population, *Mentor for 18 students on research development* Summer 2022
UW-Madison, AAE, Faculty Hiring Committee, *Student Representative* 2022
UW-Madison, AAE, Ph.D. Admission Committee, *Student Representative* 2021
Taylor-Hibbard Club, *Athletic Chair* 2020–2022
UW-Madison AAE, Development Lab Group, *Member* 2019–

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM), *Abstract Reviewer* 2023
Journal- Economics of Education Review, *Reviewer* 2022-23
American Society for Health Economists (AshEcon), *Abstract Reviewer* 2022
Agriculture and Applied Economics (AAEA), *Abstract Reviewer* 2022, 2023
AAEA-Health Economics Section (Chair- Prof. Di Fang) *Official Twitter Manager (with Lei Pan)* 2022-23

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant to Prof. Lauren Schmitz (UW Madison, School of Public Affairs) and Prof. Valentina Duque (University of Sydney, Princeton University, American University) 2020–
Research Assistant to Prof. Jeremy Foltz and Prof. Bradford Barham (UW Madison, AAE) 2018-2020
Research Assistant to Prof. Andra Ghent (UW Madison, Wisconsin School of Business) *May-Sept (2018)*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Guest Lecturer: **Agricultural & Economic Development of Africa (Health)**, (Instructor- Osaretin Olurotimi) UW-Madison, AAE 477 *Spring 2022*
Guest Lecturer: **International Studies (Gender Gap and Economics Development in Developing Countries)**, (Instructor- Prof. Jeremy Foltz) UW-Madison, AAE 374 *Spring 2022, 2023*
Guest Lecturer: **The Economics of Race and Gender** (Gender Gap in Developing Countries), (Instructor- Prof. Meghan I. Esson) Bentley University, EC 298 *Spring 2022*

TECHNICAL SKILLS

STATA, R(basic), Python(basic), Latex

REFERENCES

Jeremy Foltz (advisor)

Professor, Agricultural and Applied Economics
University of Wisconsin-Madison
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Lauren Schmitz

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