

LJUBICA (LJ) RISTOVSKA

ljubica.ristovska@yale.edu

www.ljristovska.com



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Littauer Center
1805 Cambridge St
Cambridge MA 02138

Placement Director: Jeremy Stein
Placement Director: Gabriel Chodorow-Reich
Administrative Director: Brenda Piquet

jeremy_stein@harvard.edu 617-496-6455
chodorowreich@fas.harvard.edu 617-496-3226
bpiquet@harvard.edu 617-495-8927

Education

Harvard University

Ph.D. Economics, May 2023

Wellesley College

B.A. Computer Science and Economics, *magna cum laude*, May 2013

Fields

Public Economics, Labor Economics, Health Economics

References

[Professor David Cutler](#)
Department of Economics
Harvard University
dcutler@fas.harvard.edu

[Professor Mark Shepard](#)
Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
mark_shepard@hks.harvard.edu

[Professor Jason Abaluck](#)
School of Management
Yale University
jason.abaluck@yale.edu

[Professor Zack Cooper](#)
Department of Health Policy and Management
Yale School of Public Health
zack.cooper@yale.edu

Employment

Yale University, Tobin Center for Economic Policy, Postdoctoral Associate, 2023 - present
National Bureau of Economic Research, Research Assistant for Amanda Kowalski, 2015-2017
Analysis Group, Senior Analyst (promoted from Analyst), 2013-2015

Teaching

Using Big Data to Solve Economic and Social Problems, Harvard University, teaching fellow for Professor Raj Chetty, Spring 2020 and Spring 2021
Why Is There No Cure for Health Care, Harvard University, teaching fellow for Professor David Cutler, Fall 2019 and Fall 2020
Introduction to Microeconomics, Wellesley College, teaching fellow for Professor Andre Switala, Fall 2012
Introduction to Probability and Statistics, Wellesley College, teaching fellow for Professor Brett Danaher, Spring 2012
Data Structures, Wellesley College, teaching fellow for Professor Brian Tjaden, Fall 2011

Job Market Paper

Informative Ordeals in Healthcare: Prior Authorization of Drugs in Medicaid, with Samantha Burn

Health insurers frequently impose supply-side policies in the form of ‘prior authorization’ to manage healthcare spending. Prior authorization requires providers to fill out paperwork before treatment is eligible for coverage. The stated purpose of these policies is to reduce healthcare spending by encouraging the use of lower-cost treatments of similar quality, and to ensure treatment complies with established guidelines. However, there are concerns that prior authorization may discourage needed care. Using all-payer claims data from Massachusetts in 2009-2013, we estimate the effect of prior authorization on the use of specific drugs in MassHealth, the state Medicaid fee-for-service program. Using difference-in-differences estimation, we compare Medicaid beneficiaries affected by changes in prior authorization requirements to individuals in plans of a major commercial insurer

unaffected by these policy changes. We find that prior authorizations lead to large reductions in utilization of drugs that have clear substitutes. These reductions are fully offset by increases in utilization of cheaper but equally effective drugs. However, when clear substitutes are not available, there are reductions in utilization that do not lead to substitution to similar drugs. Prior authorization reduces both high- and low-value use of drugs, suggesting that it is not well targeted.

Working Papers

Drug Adoption under Uncertain Quality and Impact of FDA (De)Certification

We examine the adoption of untested drugs and how physicians' prescribing decisions respond to trials conducted in the pediatric population after initial market entry. While pediatric approval at market entry increases market share relative to no approval, physicians adopt drugs even in settings without corresponding FDA labeling information. Even though physicians use ex-post ineffective or unsafe drugs, the ex-post effective drugs comprise the majority of FDA-unapproved uses, indicating concordance between physician prescribing and FDA decisions. Subsequent FDA certification and decertification of pediatric uses of drugs have small impacts on prescription behavior due to high rates of off-label use and large delays between market entry and subsequent labeling changes.

Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Cases and Deaths: Theories and Evidence

Non-white individuals are 1.75 times more likely to get infected with COVID-19 and 1.54 times more likely to die of COVID-19 than white individuals. Using county-level data on COVID-19 cases by race, I find that average household size and public transportation use are statistically significantly correlated with case rates by race. Consequently, equalizing demographic, socio-economic, and environmental characteristics across racial groups, in particular average household size and percent elderly, is expected to reduce Black-white case rate differences by 66%, Hispanic-white case rate differences by 300%, and AIAN/NHPI-white case rate differences by 44.5%. Equalizing the strength of correlations between these characteristics and case rates across racial groups is expected to increase Black-white and AIAN/NHPI-white racial disparities but decrease Hispanic-white disparities due to the strong relationship between average household size and case rates among the Hispanic population.

Human Capital Spillovers and Health: Does Living Around College Graduates Lengthen Life?, with Jacob Bor, David Cutler, and Edward Glaeser (*submitted*)

Equally educated people are healthier if they live in more educated places. Every 10 percent point increase in an area's share of adults with a college degree is associated with a decline in all-cause mortality by 7%, controlling for individual education, demographics, and area characteristics. Area human capital is also associated with lower disease prevalence and improvements in self-reported health. The association between area education and health increased greatly between 1990 and 2010. Spatial sorting does not drive these externalities; there is little evidence that sicker people move disproportionately into less educated areas. Differences in health-related amenities, ranging from hospital quality to pollution, explain no more than 17% of the area human capital spillovers on health. Over half of the correlation between area human capital and health is a result of the correlation between area human capital and smoking and obesity. More educated areas have stricter regulations regarding smoking and more negative beliefs about smoking. These have translated over time into a population that smokes noticeably less and that is less obese, leading to increasing divergence in health outcomes by area education.

Papers in Progress

Instrumental Variable Methods Reveal Large Risks of Menopausal Hormone Therapy in the Landmark Women's Health Initiative Clinical Trial, with Josh Angrist, Amanda Kowalski and Marcia Stefanick

Evaluating state policies to regulate healthcare spending, with Zack Cooper

Staff Composition and Patient Outcomes at Nursing Homes, with Ashvin Gandhi, David Grabowski and Brian McGarry

Regional variation in health care prices, with Mai Anh Tran, Stuart Craig and Zack Cooper

Publications

Impact of Symptomatic Skeletal Events on Healthcare Resource Utilization and Quality of Life Among Patients with Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer and Bone Metastases, with Rana McKay, Batool Haider, Mei Duh, Adriana Valderrama, Mari Nakabayashi, Matthew Fiorillo, Lonnie Wen and Philip Kantoff
Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases; 20, p. 276-282, 2017.

Functional Limitations and Health Care Resource Utilization for Individuals with Cognitive Impairment without Dementia: Findings from a US Population-Based Survey, with J. Scott Andrews, Urvi Desai, Noam Kirson, Caroline Enloe, Sarah King, Howard Birnbaum, Adam Fleisher, Wenyu Ye and Kristin Kahle-Wroblewski
Alzheimer's & Dementia: Diagnosis, Assessment & Disease Monitoring; 6, p. 65-74, 2017.

Assessing the Economic Burden of Alzheimer's Disease Patients First Diagnosed by Specialists, with Noam Kirson, Urvi Desai, Alice Kate Cummings, Howard Birnbaum, Wenyu Ye, Scott Andrews, Daniel Ball and Kristin Kahle-Wroblewski
BMC Geriatrics; 16(138), published online, 2016.

Economic Outcomes among Medicare Patients Receiving Bioengineered Cellular Technologies for Treatment of Diabetic Foot Ulcers, with J. Bradford Rice, Urvi Desai, Alice Kate Cummings, Howard Birnbaum, Michelle Skornicki, David Margolis and Nathan Parsons
Journal of Medical Economics; 18(8), p. 586-595, published online, 2015.

Other writing

Regulations and Data Sources on Pediatric Clinical Studies in the United States and European Union

National Bureau of Economic Research and Institute for Fiscal Studies Network on the Value of Medical Research; published online, 2020.

Political Consensus for the Economic Future of Republic of Macedonia (book; in Macedonian) with Marjan Nikolov, Borce Trenovski and Hristijan Ristovski
Open Society Institute; published online, 2013.

MTEBINARY: Stata Module to Compute Marginal Treatment Effects (MTE) with a Binary Instrument, with Amanda Kowalski and Yen Tran

MTEMORE: Stata Module to Compute Marginal Treatment Effects (MTE) with a Binary Instrument, with Amanda Kowalski and Yen Tran

Fellowships & Awards

Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University, Affiliate, 2022-2023

Professional Development Fund, Harvard University, 2022

Certificate for Distinction in Teaching, Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University, 2020

Certificate for Distinction in Teaching, Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University, 2019

Value of Medical Research Fellowship, National Bureau of Economic Research and Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2019-2020

Humane Studies Fellowship, Institute for Humane Studies, 2019-2020

Peggy Howard Fellowship, Wellesley College Economics Department, 2017-2018, 2019-2020

Phi Beta Kappa, Wellesley College, 2013

Sigma Xi, Wellesley College, 2013

Case Fellowship, Wellesley College Economics Department, 2012-2013

Audrey Freedman '51 Endowed Fund for Students in Economics, Wellesley College, 2012

Three Generations Prize for Writing in Science, Wellesley College Writing Department, 2011

Elizabeth Vogel Falk Prize in German, Wellesley College German Department, 2010

Seminars & Conferences

American Economic Association Annual Meeting, 2025 (scheduled, coauthor presenting)
USC Schaeffer Center and Mann School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, 2024
Southeastern Health Economics Study Group Conference, 2024
Midwest Health Economics Conference, 2024
Conference on Risky Economic Behaviors, 2024
Toulouse School of Economics Health Care Conference, 2024
American Society of Health Economists Annual Conference (x2), 2024
Barcelona School of Economics Summer Forum: Public Economics, 2024
NBER Economic Analysis of Regulation Conference, 2024 (coauthor presented)
National Tax Association Annual Meeting (x2), 2023
Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting, 2023
American Society of Health Economists Annual Conference, 2023
MIT Critical Data: Role of Data in Disaster Preparedness, 2021
NBER/IFS Value of Medical Research Conference, 2020

Academic Service

Referee for: Journal of Urban Economics, Clinical Trials: Journal of the Society for Clinical Trials, PLOS ONE
National Collegiate Research Conference Judge, 2020 and 2022
Harvard and MIT Application Assistance and Mentoring Program mentor, 2021-2022
Labor Economics and Public Finance Student Workshop at Harvard organizer, 2019-2020
Harvard Graduate Women in Economics core team member, 2018-2020
Harvard Economics Professional Development Team core team member, 2018-2020
Harvard Economics Department peer mentor, 2018-2020
Harvard University Bureau of Study Counsel tutor for Microeconomic Theory I (graduate) and Introduction to Econometrics (undergraduate), 2018-2019

Research Grants

Research Assistant Funding Grant, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Foundation, Harvard University, 2020 and 2022
Chae Family Economics Research Fund, Harvard University Economics Department, 2022
Warburg Fund, Harvard University Economics Department, 2021
Lab for Economic Applications and Policy Grant, Harvard University Economics Department, 2020

Membership

American Economic Association (AEA), American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon), National Tax Association (NTA), Southern Economic Association (SEA), Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)