

PROPOSAL: SPILLOVER EFFECTS OF HEALTH SHOCKS IN THE FAMILY

Jason Fletcher, Assistant Professor
Yale School of Public Health

Identifying causal effects of health shocks is difficult due to confounding effects of poverty and other characteristics that place individuals at differential risk of receiving a negative shock as well as potential reverse causality. One recent convincing source of identifying variation is from the rapid appearance and disappearance of the 1918 flu pandemic. For example Douglas Almond has used this variation to show that individuals *in utero* during the 1918 flu experience substantial long term disadvantage, such as increased disability and reduced socioeconomic status during adulthood. Yet to be examined, though, is potential spillover effects of health shocks, such as the flu, on other members of the household, both contemporaneously and through intergenerational transmission effects. This project will leverage the variation from the 1918 flu to examine potential spillover effects on *siblings* of affected children as well as the *offspring* of affected children.

In order to accomplish these goals, this project will use historical census data from 1920-1940, where the structure of the files allow reconstruction of family units and rich date-of-birth information allows matches with dates of the flu pandemic.

The student will help organize the data, collect information on the 1918 flu and more general background literature in the area of health spillovers, and perform statistical analyses. Knowledge of STATA is required.

The student will learn how to use large, secondary datasets, learn how to collect and summarize relevant background literature and historical documentation; learn how to work with statistical software packages and how to apply statistical techniques, including regression analysis and regression discontinuity designs, to an economic research question.