

PROPOSAL: UNDERSTANDING THE TRENDS ON MATERNAL AND NEONATAL MORTALITY IN THE 20th CENTURY.

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The relation between maternal mortality – death of women due to complications during childbirth – and neonatal mortality – the death of a baby hours or days after being born – are poorly understood today. Complications during childbirth mean that the doctors sometimes have to make a tradeoff between the health of the mother and the health of the son. Before modern medicine this choice usually meant choosing who will live and who will not. Even with modern medicine and throughout the 20th century doctors have to make similar, though less dramatic, choices between the health of the mother and the health of the baby. For example procedures such as forceps may impair the health of the baby while leaving the mother unaffected while a caesarian procedure implies a higher risk for the mother and better health for the baby. Even the decision of when or whether to intervene a pregnancy may have differential effects for the mother and for the baby.

In this project I plan to study the long run trends on both levels and the causes of maternal mortality and study the possible causes behind those trends.

The research assistant will sit in a shared office in the ISPS building at Yale with full-time research assistants and graduate students working on other health economics projects. The research assistant will also have the opportunity to learn about those projects. To facilitate interactions with other research assistants, I expect the research assistant to work during regular business hours for approximately 20 hours per week from June 1 to August 1.