Towards an Ethical Experiment

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Proposal Description:

Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) and A/B Tests enroll hundreds of millions of subjects and involve many human lives. To improve subjects’ welfare, I propose an experimental design that I call Experiment-as-Market (EXAM). EXAM optimally randomly assigns each treatment to subjects predicted to experience better treatment effects or to subjects with stronger preferences for the treatment. EXAM also incentivizes experimental subjects to truthfully report their preferences for treatments. Finally, EXAM unbiasedly estimates any causal effect estimable with standard RCTs. I plan to verify and quantify the welfare, incentive, and information properties by deploying EXAM at the largest mobile health platform in South Africa.

Requisite Skills and Qualifications:

This project involves many aspects (computational, econometric/statistical, empirical, and theoretical).

I am looking for an RA to help with any aspect the RA is interested in. An ideal candidate is somebody who has done coursework in econometrics/statistics (especially causal inference) and theoretical microeconomics (especially market design). Interests in clinical trials, social experiments, and web optimization (multi-armed bandit) are a big plus. Please attach a transcript with your application. Including a writing sample would be a plus though not required.

Project Type: Economics Predoctoral RA
Project Type Year: 2019 Economics Predoctoral Projects

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