Research Interests and Motivation for the NBER Mentoring Program on Aging and Health Economics Research

Jason (Jong Min) Jung

I am 4th year Ph.D. candidate in Economics at the University of Washington, and my research lies at the intersection of aging, health economics, and applied microeconometrics. I study how insurance design, place-based neighborhood and environment, and access to health-promoting resources shape health behaviors over the life course, with a particular emphasis on older adults. I am especially interested in understanding whether policies and institutions can promote healthy aging by increasing physical activity and fitness, and reducing downstream medical and economic burdens.

My current work focuses on healthy aging and physical activity. In my job market paper, I examine whether enrollment in Medicare Advantage (MA), which offers free fitness benefit, increases vigorous daily exercise relative to Traditional Medicare (TM), using quasi-experimental variation around Medicare eligibility. In another project, I study whether neighborhood fitness culture affects exercise behavior among older adults, asking whether moving to more active places changes individual physical activity. I am also working on geographic variation in participation in Medicare Advantage covered fitness program (SilverSneakers), with the goal of understanding how access, local environment, and insurance design affect the uptake among older populations. Across these projects, I hope to contribute to a growing literature on aging and how health behaviors are shaped not only by individual preferences, but also by institutions, incentives, and the environments.

I am interested in attending the NBER Mentoring Program on Aging and Health Economics Research because I strongly believe that I would greatly benefit from deeper mentorship on how to sharpen and position this research agenda within the economics of aging. While I have developed several projects in this area, I would value guidance on how to identify the most promising and policy-relevant questions, how to frame my work so that it speaks to broader debates in aging and health economics, and how to strengthen the connection between empirical findings and the larger economic mechanisms they imply. I am particularly eager to learn from scholars and experts in the field about how to build a coherent long-run research agenda centered on aging, insurance, health behavior, and disparities in access to health-promoting resources.

The workshop would also be especially valuable to me because I am still refining the scope of my dissertation and thinking carefully about how to prioritize among multiple related projects. I would greatly appreciate feedback on empirical strategies, data sources, and ways to connect my interest in physical activity and healthy aging to major questions in Medicare, long-term care, and the economics of prevention. More broadly, I hope the program would help me become a stronger researcher in aging and health economics by giving me mentorship, intellectual direction, and a better understanding of the most important questions in the field. I would be excited to contribute to and learn from the community of faculty mentors and fellow doctoral students participating in the program.

Jason (Jong Min) Jung

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EDUCATION

University of Washington — Seattle, WA
Ph.D. in Economics — 2022–2027 (*Expected*)
M.A. in Economics — 2024
Cornell University — Ithaca, NY
M.S. in Applied Economics and Management — 2022
Boston University — Boston, MA
B.A. in Economics (Cum Laude) — 2020
Sciences Po — Paris, France
Exchange Student (Economics) — 2018

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

University of Ljubljana — Ljubljana, Slovenia
Visiting Scholar — 2026
Seattle University — Seattle, WA
Adjunct Faculty — 2026
University of California, Berkeley — Berkeley, CA
Research Consultant — 2025–2026

WORKING PAPERS

1. **Jung, J. M.** and Li, J. "Get Fit with MA? Estimating the Impact of Medicare Advantage on Physical Activity." *[Paper]*

2. **Jung, J. M.** "Move to Move? Neighborhood Fitness Culture and Exercise Among Older Adults." *[Abstract]*

3. **Jung, J. M.**, Starc, G., Jagrič, T., Leskošek, B., Martinko, A., Sorić, M., Došenović Bonča, P., and Jurak, G. "Fitness and Childhood Obesity in Slovenia: Evidence from Municipal Data."

4. **Jung, J. M.**, Li, J., and Dow, W. "Cross-national Analysis of the Determinants of Dementia Prevalence: Evidence from the United States and Caribbean Countries."

5. Chaparro, P., **Jung, J. M.**, Wallace, J., Baquero, B., Jones-Smith, J., and Knox, M. "Factors associated with discontinued participation in a citywide fruit and vegetable incentive program: The role of community-based organizations in engaging non-English speakers" *[Abstract]*

6. **Jung, J. M.** and Basu, A. "Do Unionized Firms Have Better Management Practices?" *[Paper]*

WORK IN PROGRESS

1. Martinko, A., Sorić, M., **Jung, J. M.**, Jagrič, T., Došenović Bonča, P., Starc, G., Leskošek, B., and Jurak, G. "Physical Fitness and Health Outcomes: A Review of the Evidence."

2. Jagrič, T., **Jung, J. M.**, Došenović Bonča, P., Starc, G., Leskošek, B., Martinko, A., Sorić, M., and Jurak, G. "Fitness as National Capital: A Simulation Model of Productivity and Healthcare Costs."

3. **Jung, J. M.**, Rovniak, L., and Rosenberg, D. "Where Seniors Sweat: Geographic Variation in SilverSneakers Uptake."

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

ASHEcon Minneapolis, MN
Session Chair, Presenting Author
(Session : Incentivizing Healthy Weight-Related Behavior)
Presenting Author
(Session : Medicare Advantage - Differential Enrollment and Payment Patterns)
Discussant
(Session : Genes, Intergenerational Effects, and Long-term Effects 2026

AcademyHealth Seattle, WA
Poster presentation 2026

International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity Cádiz, Spain
Coauthor (presented by first author) 2026

APPAM Annual Conference Seattle, WA
Presenting Author & Discussant
(Session: Policies to Incentivize Engagement in Healthy Behaviors) 2025

SEMINAR AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

UW Healthy Aging Forum 2026
University of Washington School of Nursing

Medicare Advantage Data Lab Seminar 2025
Johns Hopkins University
Program in Health Economics and Outcomes Research Methodology 2025
University of Washington CHOICE Institute
Labor and Development Economics Brownbag 2025
University of Washington

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Seattle University Seattle, WA
Adjunct Faculty Instructor: ECON 2110 (Principles of Microeconomics) 2026

University of Washington Seattle, WA
Independent Instructor: ECON 200 (Introduction to Microeconomics) 2024–2026
Graduate Teaching Assistant: ECON 200 (Introduction to Microeconomics) 2023–2024

Cornell University Ithaca, NY
Graduate Teaching Assistant: AEM 2300 (International Trade and Finance) 2022
Graduate Teaching Assistant: NBA 6540 (Power and Politics in Organizations) 2021

AWARDS & GRANTS

James O. York Fellowship, University of Washington 2022

REFERENCES

Dr. Jing Li (Co-Chair)
Associate Professor
Department of Pharmacy
University of Washington
jli0321@uw.edu

Dr. Melissa Knox (Co-Chair)
Teaching Professor
Department of Economics
University of Washington
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Dr. Douglas Barthold
Associate Professor
Department of Pharmacy
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Dr. Rachel Heath
Associate Professor
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Languages: Korean (Native), English (Fluent), German (Intermediate), French (Elementary).
Programming: Stata, R, LaTeX, Python (Elementary), MS Office.

COMPLETED PH.D. COURSEWORK

Microeconomic Theory: Microeconomic Analysis I, II, and III; Practice in Microeconomics.

Macroeconomic Theory: Macroeconomic Analysis I, II, and III.

Econometrics and Quantitative Methods: Mathematical Statistics; Econometrics II and III; Econometric Theory I and II; Applied Microeconometrics; Introduction to R Programming.

Fields and Advanced Topics: Development Economics; Topics in Development Economics II; Empirical Industrial Organization; International Finance; Doctoral Seminar in Financial Economics; Strategy, Innovation, and Design Thinking.

Professional Training: Teaching Introductory Economics.