LORENZO DE MENECH

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UNIVERSITÀ DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA (USI), Switzerland

Education

2025 – present Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) (Switzerland)
Expected completion: July 2030

PhD course attendance (Study Center Gerzensee, Swiss National Bank Foundation)

- Econometrics *(Anna Mikusheva, MIT; Bo E. Honoré, Princeton)*
- Macroeconomics *(Ricardo Reis, LSE; Fernando Álvarez, U. Chicago; Jordi Galí, UPF; Dmitry Mukhin, LSE)*
- Microeconomics *(Klaus Schmidt, LMU Munich; Piero Gottardi, U. Essex; Johannes Hörner, TSE; John H. Moore, U. Edinburgh)*

PhD course attendance (Swiss Society of Health Economics, sggö)

- Economics of Ageing *(Jonathan Skinner, Dartmouth; Fabrizio Mazzonna, USI)*
- Health Policy and Politics *(Andrew Street, LSE; Giuliano Masiero, USI; Fabrizio Mazzonna, USI)*

2021-2023 MSc in Economics and Data Analysis, Università degli studi di Verona (Italy)
Thesis Title: "*Unraveling the impact of biological age on healthcare utilization and resource planning*"

09/2022 - 03/2023 MSc in Business Management and Economics, University of Wurzburg, Erasmus programme (Germany)

2018-2021 BSc in Economics, Università degli studi di Padova (Italy)

References

Professor Fabrizio Mazzonna
Università della Svizzera italiana
fabrizio.mazzonna@usi.ch

Professor Catia Nicodemo
University of Oxford
catia.nicodemo@economics.ox.ac.uk

Research Fields

Primary: Applied microeconomics, Health economics, Labor economics;
Secondary: Economics of aging; Biological aging;

Employment

11/2024 – 06/2025 Research Assistant, Università degli studi di Verona / Project: Flexible approaches to support health through financing
02/2024 - 10/2024 Business Analyst, Accenture Spa / strategy & consulting insurance

Presentation and conferences

1/2025 13^{th} Alpine Population Conference (Alp-Pop) 2025 / Poster presentation
7/2024 European Health Economics Association (EuHEA) Conference 2024 / Long talk presentation
4/2024 Summer Institute of Ageing - The value of longitudinal data to study ageing / Workshop

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships

2023 ALVEC Graduate of the Year Award

Working Papers

1. Blood-based Biological Age: Detecting Health Risks the Calendar Misses (with Catia Nicodemo and Alessandro Steccanella) - *(draft available upon request)*

Software and Languages

- **Statistical:** Stata, R, Python, MATLAB
- **Languages:** Italian (native), English (fluent), German (beginner)

Personal Information

Date of birth: 19.09.1999 Citizenship: Italian

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

I am a first-year PhD candidate in Economics at Università della Svizzera italiana (USI Lugano), working under Prof. Fabrizio Mazzonna in health, labour, and the economics of aging. With Catia Nicodemo (Oxford) and Alessandro Steccanella, I am writing a paper that builds a measure of biological age from epigenetic and simple clinical biomarkers and uses it to identify individuals at elevated risk of mortality and intensive healthcare use more accurately than chronological age or standard health proxies. We then quantify how much of the mortality gap between high- and low-income individuals is driven by differences in biological aging, and find that this channel is widening the gap further, at the expense of the disadvantaged. The broader question I am drawn to is how aging unfolds unequally across the lifecycle and what that means at the aggregate level: how stressful socioeconomic circumstances embed themselves in individual health trajectories, how short-run economic shocks accelerate or decelerate the aging process in adulthood, a margin still less studied than the long-run determinants (documented by Chetty and Deaton for example), and how those individual dynamics aggregate into the labour-supply, productivity, and fiscal consequences of population aging. My ambition is to bridge reduced-form micro evidence on the aging gradient with a lifecycle framework of health-capital accumulation, though at this stage it is a direction rather than a fully formed agenda.

What draws me specifically to this program is the concentration, within NBER's Aging and Health Economics group, of the scholarship that has most shaped how I think about these questions. Work currently being pushed forward at the program's meetings, for example, on the aggregate consequences of changing elderly health and longevity, on cross-country variation in cognitive and physical health trajectories, on the long-run mortality effects of healthcare access and institutional reform, and on the structure of inequality in life expectancy, sits exactly at the intersection where I would like to position my dissertation. USI provides excellent training in applied microeconomics, and Prof. Mazzonna brings the sharp econometric and health intuition that has shaped how I approach identification in this area. The questions I want to pursue, however, require holding both lenses at once: ideally, I would start from micro evidence on the aging gradient and work toward embedding it in a lifecycle framework of health-capital accumulation. However, the micro evidence cannot be lifted into that framework without structural foundations, and the macro questions lose their empirical anchor without rigorous identification. Joining this program would let me test, with senior input, whether the two can be bridged in a practical and well-informed way, so that I choose the right direction for my dissertation. As I am about to start my second year, I am still deciding how to position the thesis, and the workshop is a rare opportunity to identify and refine the central research question before sunk costs make pivoting expensive — before I commit too far to assumptions I have not yet tested.

The guidance I would benefit most from is therefore directional rather than technical: senior input on whether biological-age measures are tractable inputs to lifecycle and structural models given current data limitations, on which datasets and identification strategies best capture short-run biological-aging dynamics in adulthood, and on how to frame the agenda so it engages the macroeconomic literature on health and longevity without losing the empirical rigour of the micro foundation. The mentoring this program offers, the proximity to the senior scholars active in its meetings, and the chance to work alongside other early-career researchers thinking about research on aging would be otherwise hard to find only in Lugano.