Kaihua Xue

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Education

Pennsylvania State University 2023–Present
Ph.D. in Economics *University Park, PA*
Pennsylvania State University 2021–2023
M.A. in Economics *University Park, PA*
University of International Business and Economics 2013–2017
B.A. in Finance *Beijing, China*

Dissertation Supervisor

Primary Dissertation Supervisor: Conor B. Ryan

Completed PhD Coursework

- Theory: Microeconomic Analysis, Macroeconomic Analysis, Advanced Microeconomic Theory, Advanced Macroeconomic Theory.
- Econometrics: Econometrics I–II, Empirical Methods,Mathematical Economics.
- Fields: Industrial Organization and Public Policy, Labor Economics, Development Economics,Seminar in Econometric Theory.
- Other: Research and Knowledge Transfer Methods.

Research Areas

Applied Microeconomics, Industrial Organization, Health Economics,Economics of Aging,Labor

Research Experience

Master's Thesis: Labor Market Effects of Medicaid Expansion

- Examined the long-term effects of Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on labor market outcomes among low-income adults from 2010–2019.
- Constructed panel datasets from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and analyzed multiple employment transition patterns.
- Applied staggered difference-in-differences (DiD) and triple-difference (DDD) methods to estimate policy effects and gender heterogeneity.
- Conducted robustness checks to validate empirical findings.
- Found limited overall labor market effects of Medicaid expansion, but evidence suggests that the policy may reduce gender disparities in labor market outcomes.

Ph.D.Third-Year Paper: Subsidy Expansions and Medical Insurance Choice

- Examined how premium subsidy expansions affect insurance take-up and plan choice in the ACA Marketplace.
- Constructed and merged large-scale administrative datasets from CMS Marketplace Public Use Files and the American Community Survey (ACS) covering 2017–2022.
- Estimated a structural demand model allowing heterogeneity in price sensitivity across income groups and preferences across age groups.
- Conducted counterfactual analyses to evaluate the effects of subsidy expansions on extensive and intensive margins of insurance demand.
- Found that subsidy expansions substantially increased insurance take-up rate(extensive effect), while having relatively modest effects on plan choice conditional on enrollment(intensive effect).

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Pennsylvania State University

- Introductory Microeconomic Analysis and Policy
- Labor Economics
- Master's Scholarly Essay

Skills

Languages: Chinese (Native), English (Fluent)
Coding software/tools: MATLAB, Stata, Python,VS code,Microsoft Excel

Research Interests and Motivation

Kaihua Xue(Penn State)

Research Interests

My research interests lie at the intersection of industrial organization, health economics, and the economics of aging, with a focus on how healthcare systems organize and deliver care for an aging population. In particular, I am interested in understanding how Medicare shapes healthcare delivery for older adults and how insurers and providers respond to the challenges associated with population aging. As demand for post-acute care, long-term care, and other healthcare services continues to grow among older populations, I am interested in how incentives affect the organization of care, healthcare utilization, market structure, and patient outcomes. I am also interested in how artificial intelligence can reduce information asymmetries between patients, providers, and insurers, and whether these tools can meaningfully improve healthcare delivery and outcomes for older adults.

Motivation for attending the mentoring workshop

First, I am currently a third-year PhD student, and this summer I am actively exploring potential job market paper topics. One topic I have been considering is how the growth of Medicare Advantage may affect care for older adults, particularly through post-acute care markets such as Long-Term Care Hospitals (LTCHs). I am interested in understanding how insurers' incentives influence the delivery of care for aging populations. While publicly available CMS data offer a useful starting point for preliminary research, many of the questions that interest me ultimately require access to restricted datasets such as Medicare claims data and All-Payer Claims Databases, which can be difficult for graduate students to access. I would greatly benefit from learning more about data availability, access procedures, and funding opportunities that could support this line of research. And I hope this workshop will help me identify concrete pathways forward.

Second, after attending Penn State AI and the Economy Initiative workshops this spring, I became interested in how artificial intelligence might improve healthcare delivery by addressing information frictions such as gaps in care coordination and provider decision-making,which disproportionately affect older adults navigating complex healthcare systems. However, I currently have limited experiment design resources, funding opportunities, and professional networks needed to pursue research in this area. Through this mentoring workshop, I hope that I can connect with researchers working at the intersection of AI, aging, and healthcare and potentially become involved in research projects studying AI, aging, and healthcare.

Finally, I hope to build connections with researchers working in aging and health economics, identify potential collaborators across institutions, and receive long-term mentorship as I continue to develop my research agenda and future job market paper.