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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Education

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA
Ph.D. Economics 2020-2026 (expected)

Chinese University of Hong Kong, China
M.Phil Economics 2017-2019

Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands
B.Sc. Economics and Business Economics (cum laude) 2015-2017

Sung Kyun Kwan University, South Korea
B.Sc. in Economics 2012-2019

Fields

Health, Public, and Development economics

References

Julian Reif
University of Illinois
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Mark Daniel Bernhardt
University of Illinois
Department of Economics
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David Molitor
University of Illinois
Gies College of Business
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Employment

Asian Development Bank, Consultant, 2019-2020
Republic of Korea Air Force, 2013-2015

Research

Research Assistant, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Julian Reif, 2021-2026
Research Assistant, Asian Development Bank, Hyuncheol Bryant Kim, 2019-2020
Research Assistant, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Laura Hering, 2016-2017

Teaching

Intermediate Macroeconomics, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Wallace Kai Chung Mok, 2017-2019

Job Market Paper

Health Screening and Selection: Evidence from Biennial Subsidies in South Korea

Public health screening programs are widely used, but their impact is often limited by low participation among high-risk individuals who stand to benefit most from early diagnosis. I study selection into health screenings and their causal effects using quasi-random variation from South Korea's National Health Screening Program, which subsidizes 90-100% of screening costs every other year at even-numbered ages. Using nationally representative survey data, I find that subsidy eligibility increases screening completion by 16-19 percentage points (183-295%). Compliers with the subsidies are predominantly from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and are in poorer health than those who always participate regardless of subsidies. Using national health insurance claims data, I find that subsidy eligibility increases both in-situ and invasive cancer diagnoses by 17-19%, as well as treatments for conditions including cancer precursors, hypertension, diabetes, high

cholesterol, and osteoporosis. These results demonstrate that subsidies can effectively target high-risk individuals and strengthen the impact of public health screening programs.

Working Papers

Spousal Spillover in Health Screening: Evidence from National Health Screening Program in South Korea (with Hyuncheol Bryant Kim and Jaehyun Jung)

This study investigates spousal spillover in health screenings using South Korea's National Health Screening Program, which subsidizes 90–100% of screening costs biennially at even-numbered ages. Using spouse's even age as an instrument, we estimate that a spouse's screening increases one's own participation by 7.9 percentage points, 37% of the direct subsidy effect. Evidence points to coordination as a key mechanism, as many couples undergo screening on the same day. We also find contrasting patterns of selection by own subsidy eligibility. Among subsidy-eligible individuals, those with low socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to respond to their spouse's screening, while among ineligible individuals, spillovers are concentrated among those with high SES. These results suggest that spousal spillovers can be used to increase participation and reduce socioeconomic disparities in preventive care.

When Gender Norms Shape the Returns to Education: Evidence from Health Behaviors in Indonesia (with Jaysa Rafi)

Education is widely used as a tool for improving health, but its returns depend on cultural and gender norms. This paper examines Indonesia's primary school construction program and its long-term effects on education and health behaviors. Using geographic and cohort variation in school exposure, we find that the program increased primary school completion for both genders, but downstream outcomes diverged. For women, higher schooling declined, likely due to household budget constraints and son preference, while men were unaffected. Women exposed to the program were less likely to smoke, whereas men's smoking, associated with social status and masculinity, did not change. Those exposed to the program were more likely to vaccinate their high-parity sons, but not daughters, consistent with stronger son preference for later-born children. These results show that education policies can yield unequal health returns when social norms shape how education translates into behaviors.

Misinformation Belief, Health Behavior, and Labor Supply during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from Tricycle Drivers in Philippines (with Hyuncheol Bryant Kim, Syngjoo Choi, Yasuyuki Sawada, and Takashi Yamano) (Revise and Resubmit, *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics*)

This study aims to analyze the behavioral consequences of people's beliefs in conspiracy theories and misinformation surrounding COVID-19 vaccines. We employ unique panel data to examine the relationship of belief in misinformation, vaccination behavior, and labor supply of tricycle drivers in the Philippines. We find that individuals with higher risk preference are more likely to hold misinformed beliefs. These beliefs, in turn, are associated with reductions in vaccination and other preventive health behaviors. We also find that beliefs in misinformation delay workplace recovery.

Papers in Progress

The Cost of False Alarms: Evidence from Cancer Screening in South Korea

This project evaluates the consequences of false positive and false negative results from cancer screenings, with a focus on their relative costs. Using data from South Korea's National Health Screening Program, which records both initial and final cancer diagnoses, I will estimate the impact of false test results on subsequent mortality and health care spending. Comparing the

overall costs of false positives and false negatives will provide evidence on optimal testing thresholds that balance the trade-offs between the two sources of error.

What Drives Cancer Screening Use? Evidence from Migration

This project examines the impact of moving to regions with higher or lower mammography use on long-term cancer detection and cancer-specific mortality. Using U.S. Medicare data, I find that movers rapidly adopt the screening patterns of the destination, indicating that preventive behaviors are strongly influenced by place-specific factors. Building on this, I will estimate the effects of such moves on subsequent cancer detection and mortality.

Other Publications

Geographic differences in the mortality burden of the Covid-19 pandemic (with Julian Reif and Hanke Heun-Johnson, *IGPA Policy Spotlight*, 2023)

Post-Pandemic Employment Recovery: Case Study of Tricycle Drivers in Metro Manila (with Takashi Yamano, Yasuyuki Sawada, Shigehiro Shinozaki, Hyuncheol Bryant Kim, and Syngjoo Choi, *Informal Services in Asian Cities: Lessons for Urban Planning and Management from the Covid-19 Pandemic*, 2022)

Fellowships & Awards

Boltz Fellowship, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2025
Harbeson Memorial Fellowship, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2024
Brems Third Year Paper Award, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2023
Best Graduate Student Paper, Missouri Valley Economic Association, 2022
Thesis Competition Award, Korean Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, 2019
Excellence Scholarship for non-EEA students, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2016
Samsung Global Scholarship, Sung Kyun Kwan University, 2012

Seminars & Conferences

American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon), Nashville, 2025
Asian Economic Development Conference, Seoul, 2024
Asian Workshop on Econometrics and Health Economics, Manila, 2023
Washington University in St. Louis Economics Graduate Student Conference, St. Louis, 2023
Asia-Pacific Economic Science Association, Seoul, 2023
Missouri Valley Economic Association Conference, St. Louis, 2022

Academic Service

Referee for *American Journal of Health Economics*

Languages

English (fluent), Korean (fluent), Spanish (beginner), Chinese (beginner)

Software skills

Stata, Python, R, Latex

(Last updated in September 2025)