

# Ehsan Mohaghegh Dowlatabadi

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics

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## Education

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**Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs** 2021–Present  
*Ph.D. in Economics (expected May 2027)*

- *Dissertation:* Birth Outcomes in the United States.
- *Committee:* Dr. Jeffrey Kubik (Chair), Dr. John Cawley, Dr. Sarah Hamersma, Dr. Hamid Noghanibehambari

**Binghamton University, State University of New York** 2020  
*M.A. in Economics*

**Institute for Management and Planning Studies** 2017  
*M.S. in Socioeconomic Systems Engineering*

**Kharazmi University** 2014  
*B.S. in Industrial Engineering*

## Research Fields

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**Primary:** Health Economics

**Secondary:** Public Economics

## Job Market Paper

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### “The Smartphone Effect: Mobile Broadband and Health at Birth”

This paper examines whether the expansion of mobile broadband access affects birth outcomes among young mothers. The introduction of the iPhone in 2007, and its exclusivity to AT&T through early 2011, generated large geographic differences in access to mobile broadband. We combine the universe of U.S. births to mothers aged 10-24 over 2000-2015 with county-level AT&T coverage data in a difference-in-differences design. Greater coverage after 2007 reduced average birth weight by roughly 3.9 grams per standard deviation, reduced fetal growth and increased the incidence of low birth weight and small-for-gestational-age births, while having little effect on gestational length or preterm birth. The effects emerge after 2007 and grow as smartphone adoption diffuses, with limited evidence of pre-trends in the event studies. We also find that mobile broadband exposure altered prenatal-care utilization and smoking behavior along with dropping their sleep duration by 16 minutes among young women, and changed the observable composition of women giving birth. The results are robust to a set of falsification exercises, including placebo treatment dates and alternative carrier coverage measures, which yield little evidence of comparable effects outside the AT&T coverage setting. The findings show that the consequences of the smartphone revolution extended beyond fertility and into the health of the next generation.

## Working Papers

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### “Public Prescription Drug Insurance and Welfare: Evidence from Medicare Part D”

This paper evaluates the welfare effects of Medicare Part D in the United States. A central question is whether the benefits of public prescription drug insurance justify its fiscal cost. Using Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) data from 2000 to 2012 and an Instrumental Variable (IV) estimation, we estimate that Part D improves health by 0.017 quality-adjusted life years, reduced out-of-pocket prescription drug spending by about \$490, and increased total prescription drug spending by about \$432. These estimates imply that Part D improved financial protection while also increasing access to medications and generating measurable health gains. To translate

these reduced-form effects into welfare terms, we incorporate the estimates into two complementary frameworks; a complete-information approach and an optimization-based approach. These frameworks allow for a direct quantification of recipients' willingness to pay for Medicare Part D relative to the public cost of provision. The gross government cost per recipient is estimated at \$3,221, while the net resource cost is \$922. The difference, about \$2299, reflects transfers to private companies who provide subsidized insurance. We estimate the willingness to pay for the Medicare part D is between \$1826.51 and \$1281 per year, and marginal value of public funds is between 1.389 and 1.9806 based on the different approaches.

### **“Public Health Insurance and Infant Health: Evidence from Medicaid Funding Cuts in Texas”** *(with Quan Qi, Xin Brown, Nahid Tavasoli, Hamid Noghanibehambari)*

This paper examines the effects of the 2005 Texas Medicaid funding cutbacks on prenatal care utilization, birth outcomes, and infant mortality. Using the universe of U.S. natality and mortality records from 2000 to 2010, we implement event study and difference in differences designs comparing Texas to other states. The cutbacks led to sizable reductions in Medicaid receipt, healthcare utilization, and prenatal care, including fewer visits and delayed initiation of care. These disruptions were accompanied by declines in birth weight and increases in adverse measures of health at birth, including low birth weight, very low birth weight, extreme low birth weight, and very preterm birth. Infant mortality rose by roughly 7 percent in respect to average infant mortality. Heterogeneity analyses show that these adverse effects occurred across all racial, ethnic, and educational groups, with especially large percentage deteriorations in severe outcomes, such as very preterm birth and extreme low birth weight, among Black and Hispanic mothers. Overall, the results demonstrate that Medicaid retrenchment meaningfully undermined early life health and underscore the importance of stable public insurance coverage during pregnancy.

### **“Long-Term Mental Health Effects of Schooling in Four Diverse Low- and Middle-Income Countries: New Causal Evidence”** *(with Vikesh Amin, Alfonso Flores-Lagunes, Carlos Flores and Giuseppe Germinario)*

Can schooling protect against mental health problems decades later in life? We address this important policy-relevant question for older adults in Brazil, China, India, and Mexico using aging studies modelled after the US Health & Retirement Study and a nonparametric partial-identification approach that bounds the causal effect. We document important effects at the lower part of the schooling distribution. An extra year of schooling reduces the probability of likely being depressed (depressive symptoms) by 0.0-3.3% (0.0-0.03 SDs) in Brazil; 0.3-5.5% (0.01-0.06 SDs) in China, 1.1-3.8% (0.01-0.04 SDs) in India, and 0.6-6.2% (0.01-0.07 SDs) in Mexico. We further investigate heterogeneity by gender and social background and estimate effects of schooling on potential mechanisms (general and cognitive health, SES). We find suggestive evidence that the effects of primary schooling may (1) be working through better cognitive health and higher SES, (2) differ by gender in India, and (3) differ by social background in China and India. At other schooling margins (e.g., increasing schooling from lower- to upper-secondary, or from upper- to post-secondary), we cannot statistically distinguish between null, small, moderate and large effects.

## **Work in Progress**

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### **“No-Fault Divorce Laws and Birth Outcomes”** *(with Hamid Noghanibehambari)*

Draft soon.

### **“Unemployment at Older Ages and Food Security: The Role of Social Insurance.”** *(with Andrew Smith and Jooyoung Kim)*

Draft soon.

### **“The Intergenerational Effects of Social Programs on Birth Outcomes in the United States.”**

## **Research Experiences**

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**Research Assistant** to Dr. Alfonso Flores-Lagunes, Syracuse University

2022–2024

- “Optimal Monotone Instrumental Variable (MIV) for Shrinking Nonparametric Bounds.”
- “Causal Effects of Schooling on Memory at Older Ages in Six Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Nonparametric Evidence With Harmonized Datasets”

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Research Assistant</b> to Dr. Tidiane Ly, Syracuse University        | Spring 2024 |
| – “Tax Competition Under Structural Models.”                            |             |
| <b>Research Assistant</b> to Dr. Hugo Jales, Syracuse University        | Spring 2025 |
| – “Public Sector Queuing and the Public Sector Wage gap.”               |             |
| <b>Research Assistant</b> to Dr. Subal Kumbhakar, Binghamton University | Spring 2021 |
| – “Monte Carlo Simulations for the New Estimators.”                     |             |

### Pre-PhD Publication

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#### “The Indirect Effects of Oil Price on Consumption through Assets”

with Seyedeh Fatemeh Razmi, Leila Torki, and Seyed Mohammad Javad Razmi

*International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy*, 12(1): 236–242, 2022.

### Teaching Experiences

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Instructor</b> , Intermediate Microeconomics, Syracuse University                                                                                                   | Evaluation 2024 |
|                                                                                                                                                                        | Evaluation 2025 |
| Independently designed and taught the course, including prepared lectures, assignments, and examinations; assessed student performance; and held regular office hours. |                 |
| <b>Guest Lecturer/Teaching Assistant</b> , Labor Economics, Syracuse University                                                                                        | Spring 2026     |
| <b>Guest Lecturer/Teaching Assistant</b> , Statistics, Syracuse University                                                                                             | Spring 2026     |
| <b>Guest Lecturer/Teaching Assistant</b> , Introduction to Microeconomics, Syracuse University                                                                         | 2021–2023       |
| <b>Teaching Assistant</b> , Quantitative Methods, Syracuse University                                                                                                  | 2026            |
| <b>Teaching Assistant</b> , Introduction to Macroeconomics, Syracuse University                                                                                        | 2022–2025       |
| <b>Teaching Assistant</b> , Advanced Statistics (Ph.D. level), Syracuse University                                                                                     | Summer 2023     |
| <b>Teaching Assistant</b> , Introduction to Microeconomics, Binghamton University                                                                                      | 2019–2020       |

### Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

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| Research Excellence Doctoral Funding, Graduate School, Syracuse University | 2023–2024 |
| Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Graduate School, Syracuse University | 2024      |

### Conference Presentations

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| Southern Economic Association (SEA), 96th Annual Meeting ( <i>scheduled</i> ) | Nov. 2026   |
| APPAM Fall Research Conference, Boston, MA ( <i>scheduled</i> )               | Nov. 2026   |
| Buffalo Health Economics Conference (BHEC), Buffalo, NY ( <i>scheduled</i> )  | Oct. 2026   |
| Western Economic Association International, Denver, CO                        | July 2026   |
| Essen Economics of Mental Health Workshop, University of Minnesota, MN        | August 2024 |

## Technical Skills

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**Software** Stata, R, Python, MATLAB, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X.

**Languages** English (fluent), Persian (native), Arabic (intermediate), Spanish (basic).

## Professional and University Services

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Journal Referees: *Annals of Operations Research* (1), *Soft Computing* (2), *European Journal of Education* (1), *Natural Language Processing* (1), *Int. J. of Computational Intelligence Studies* (1) 2023–2026

Graduate Student Representative, Center for Policy Research. 2024–2026

Head of Budget and Finance Committee, Graduate Student Association. 2022–23, 2025–26

## References

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### Dr. Jeffrey Kubik

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Syracuse University  
jdkubik@syr.edu

### Dr. John Cawley

Professor, Department of Economics  
Syracuse University  
jhcawley@syr.edu

### Dr. Sarah Hamersma

Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration and International Affairs  
Syracuse University  
sehamers@syr.edu

### Dr. Hamid Noghanibehambari

Assistant Professor, College of Business  
Austin Peay State University  
noghanibehambarih@apsu.edu