



UC Center Sacramento

“Curriculum Reforms and Intergenerational Health”

Wednesday, October 27th

12:00 - 1:00pm

In light of the community concerns regarding COVID-19, this talk will be given as a webinar. The link will be provided on October 26th to those that have registered by 5:00 pm on Monday, October 25th at uccs.ucdavis.edu.

Infant mortality rates in the U.S. are more than twenty times higher for low birth weight infants than those of normal birth weight, and two-thirds of all infant deaths in 2016 occurred to infants who were born premature (National Center for Health Statistics, 2018). In addition to imminent health risks, a number of studies have shown that poor infant health persists into adulthood and adversely contributes to behavioral and labor market outcomes. Perhaps not surprisingly, these large private and social costs of health at birth have attracted considerable attention among policymakers and researchers, and maternal education has long been a focal point. From a theoretical perspective, maternal education is believed to affect child quality through a variety of channels, ranging from improved financial resources to healthier behavior, from ability to acquire and process information to positive assortative matching. Despite this belief, empirical evidence regarding the intergenerational transmission of education on child health is mixed.

This talk takes a novel approach and exploits changes in the U.S. high school curriculum, which shift the allocation of existing time in school, to analyze the relationship between intergenerational transmission of education and infant health (measured by birth weight and gestational age). The results suggest that curriculum reforms significantly reduced the incidence of low birth weight and prematurity for black mothers. For white mothers, the estimated effects are small and generally insignificant. Further examination of the potential channels reveals that curriculum reforms are associated with improvements in maternal health behaviors (reduced smoking during pregnancy) and economic outcomes. Total social gain induced by favorable infant health outcomes can be more than two billion dollars.



Dr. Ozkan Eren is currently an Associate Professor of Economics at UC Riverside and an affiliated faculty at the Robert Presley Center of Crime and Justice Studies. His research focuses on questions in economics of education, economics of crime, and public policy. His work has been published in journals such as *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *Journal of Labor Economics*, *Journal of Public Economics*, *Journal of Law and Economics* and *Journal of Applied Econometrics*. His research has often appeared in the media, being featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Fortune Magazine*, *Boston Globe* and *USA Today*. He serves as the Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Labor Research*.

For questions contact Brooke Miller-Jacobs at (916) 445-5161 or UCCS-talks@ucdavis.edu

The views and opinions expressed during this lecture are those of the speaker and do not necessarily represent the views of UCCS.