

ANDREEA BALAN-COHEN

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EDUCATION:

Ph.D., Economics, Harvard University, 2007
Dissertation: Essays in Health and Public Economics
Committee: David Cutler, Claudia Goldin, Larry Katz
B.A., Economics, Harvard University, *summa cum laude*, 2001

CURRENT POSITION

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Tufts University, September 2007-present
Core Faculty Member, International Relations Program, Tufts University, September 2007-present
Harvard University, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies Associate, July 2008-present

WORKING PAPERS:

“The Effect of Income on Elderly Mortality: Evidence From the Old Age Assistance Program In The United States” (*Previously circulated as “Healthy, Wealthy and Wise? The Impact of the Old Age Assistance Program on Elderly Mortality in the United States” (November 2006, under review)*)

How much have government programs improved the well-being of the most vulnerable elderly? To analyze this question, I examine the impact of Old Age Assistance (OAA)—the first significant U.S. welfare program for the elderly—on the mortality of older Americans from 1930-1955. I construct two new data sets: a database of OAA benefits and rules, and a database of mortality by age, race, gender, and cause of death. To control for the joint determination of income and mortality, I use a simulated instrumental variables approach that relies on exogenous changes in OAA legislation at the state and year level. I find a substantial reduction in mortality for many vulnerable elderly groups, especially poor males. Mortality decreased mainly because of declines in risky behavior, infectious diseases (after the introduction of antibiotics) and suicides. Household survey analyses reveal changes in consumption consistent with these patterns. Overall, OAA income transfers were highly effective in preventing deaths among the elderly poor by increasing their access to health care and altering their behavior.

“Sobering Up: The Impact of the 1985-1988 Russian Prohibition on Child Health” (*May 2007*).

This paper estimates the impact of parental alcohol consumption on child health by taking advantage of a unique shock to alcohol supply: the 1985 to 1988 alcohol prohibition campaign in Russia. This campaign was temporally short lived, and resulted in large amounts of exogenous geographic variation in its intensity and effectiveness. I construct a new data set that combines the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey with regional data on alcohol consumption. Using both a differences-in-differences approach, as well as instrumental variables methods, I find significant improvements in child height, immunization rates, and chronic conditions among children born during prohibition who also lived in regions with effective anti-alcohol campaigns. This confirms the effect of investments during a child’s fetal period and first two years of life on long-term health measures, and demonstrates a potential positive effect of suppressing parental access to alcohol. Furthermore, evidence from vaccination rates suggests that the positive effect of prohibition on child health occurred through improvements in parental time, rather than income resources.

“Taking Care of the Elderly: Political Economy In the Early Years of Social Security (*with Radu Ban, March 2007, under review*)

We use the variation in political incentives of state governors provided by term limits to show that the variation in the level of OAA benefits per recipient between 1931 and 1955 was due to governors’ vote seeking behavior. Governors who faced reelection were more likely to increase benefits than lame duck office holders. The manipulation of OAA increased with the degree of political competition, and decreased in the presence of strong lobbying groups for alternate spending programs. We also find that the manipulation of OAA policy was greater in states with a smaller fraction of elderly in the population, presumably due to the increased costs of enacting programs. This paper provides evidence that the elderly wielded significant political power in the United States at least two decades earlier than previous studies have suggested.

INVITED SEMINARS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2009 American Economic Association, IHEA Health Economics Congress, NBER Health Care Meeting
- 2008 American Society of Health Economists Biennial Conference (ASHE), 19th Annual Health Economics Conference (AHEC), IDEI Toulouse Health Economics and the Pharmaceutical Industry Conference, European Economic Association, Southern Economic Association, Harvard School of Public Health
- 2007 Boston University, Cornell University (ILR), Harvard (Kennedy School of Government), Harvard University (Economics), Mathematica Policy Research, McGill University, Swarthmore College, Tufts University, Williams College, Northeast Universities Development Consortium Conference (NEUDC)
- 2006 Harvard University

HONORS, GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS:

- 2006-2007 Center for Retirement Research Dissertation Fellowship
- 2006 Economic History Association Exploratory Data Grant
- 2006 Center for American Political Studies Graduate Seed Grant
- 2006,2005 Warburg Foundation Summer Grant for Poverty Research
- 2004 Columbia University ISERP Grant for Research (with C. Pop-Eleches)
- 2004 Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies Travel Grant
- 2003 Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies Grant
- 2003 Weatherhead Ctr. for International Affairs, Justice, Welfare and Economics Grant
- 2001-2006 Harvard University Graduate Fellowship
- 2001 Phi Beta Kappa
- 2001 Williams Prize for Best Student in Economics

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND AFFILIATIONS:

- Referee** *Journal of Development Economics, B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Public Policy, Journal of Labor Economics, Milbank Quarterly*
- Organizer** Tufts Economics Department Seminar Series, 2008, 2009
- Member:** American Economic Association, American Society of Health Economists/International Health Economics Association, European Economic Association, the Econometric Society, Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession

TEACHING

- Tufts University**—Health economics, Intermediate Microeconomics
- Harvard University**—Health and Economic Development: Policy and Empirics (*Excellence in Teaching Award*), Econometrics (*teaching assistant, Certificate for Distinction in Teaching*)

LANGUAGES: Romanian (fluent), English (fluent), French (proficient), Spanish (reading), Italian (reading)