

SUBHA MANI

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Contact Details

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Research Interests

Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics, Applied Econometrics, Education, Health, Demography

Teaching Interests

Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics, Applied Econometrics, Intermediate Microeconomics, Intermediate Macroeconomics, Principles of Microeconomics, Principles of Macroeconomics, Intermediate Econometrics, and Basic Statistics

Education

Ph.D. Economics, University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles, CA, August 2002-May 2008 (Expected completion)

M.A. Economics, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, August 2002-December 2003

M.A. Economics, Mumbai University, Mumbai, India, August 2000-May 2002

B.A. Economics (Honors), University of Delhi, India, August 1997-May 2000

Dissertation Title

Essays in Human Capital Accumulation – Health and Education

Chair and Primary Advisor: Professor John Strauss Co-chair: Professor Jeffrey B. Nugent

Research Papers

Is there Complete, Partial, or No Recovery from Childhood Malnutrition? – Empirical Evidence from Indonesia (Job Market Paper)

Abstract: In Indonesia, more than 30% of children under the age of 5 years suffer from chronic malnourishment. The long-term consequences of childhood malnutrition are well established in the literature. Yet, little is known about the extent to which these children are able to recover from some of the long-term deficits in health outcomes caused by childhood undernourishment. To capture the association between nutritional deficiency at young ages and subsequent health status, a panel data is constructed using observations on children between ages 3 and 59 months in 1993 who are followed through the 1997 and 2000 waves of the Indonesian Family Life Survey. A dynamic conditional health demand function is estimated, where the coefficient on the one-period lagged health status captures the extent of recovery, if any, from childhood

malnutrition. This coefficient is also known as the 'catch-up' term. Variants of the IV/GMM estimation strategy are used here to obtain an unbiased and consistent coefficient estimate on the lagged dependent variable. While the OLS coefficient estimate on the one-period lagged health status is 0.53, it is only 0.23 in a first-difference GMM framework, indicating an upward bias in the OLS parameter estimate.

A coefficient of 0.23 on the one-period lagged health status indicates that poor nutrition at young ages will cause some, but not severe, retardation in the growth of future height indicating partial catch-up effects. In the absence of any catch-up, by adolescence, a malnourished child will grow to be 4.15 cm shorter than a well-nourished child. However, a coefficient of 0.23 estimated here indicates that by adolescence, a malnourished child will grow to be only 0.95 cm shorter than a well-nourished child. The first-difference GMM strategy used here is especially attractive in this context as it relies on much weaker stochastic assumptions than earlier papers and addresses both omitted variables bias and measurement error bias in data.

Determinants of Schooling Outcomes among Children in Rural Ethiopia (with John Hoddinott and John Strauss)

Abstract: Ethiopia continues to suffer from high levels of poverty and under 5 mortality rates. Yet surprisingly, it has experienced remarkable improvements in its primary school outcomes during 1994-2004. This paper focuses on outlining the socio-economic factors that explain for the huge improvements in schooling enrollments and grade attainments in rural Ethiopia during this period. We find using data from the three waves (1994, 1999 and 2004) of the Ethiopian Rural Household survey (ERHS), that it is household income that has the most important role in determining schooling outcomes among children. During 1994-2004, household income increased by over 25% and this increase translated into a more than proportionate increase in schooling attainments.

The schooling literature has so far, only focused on current period determinants of schooling outcomes. However, schooling attainments today are not just a function of current resources; it is the history of school inputs and resources that determines the complete trajectory of future schooling outcomes. The second part of this paper estimates a dynamic conditional schooling demand function to capture the impact of past inputs in explaining current schooling attainments. We find that individual's past schooling resources contributes towards one-third of the child's current schooling outcomes. In addition, the results obtained in this paper are robust to econometric concerns such as sample selection, measurement error, and endogeneity of the lagged dependent variable.

Role of the Household and the Community in determining Child Health (contributed to the 'Gender and Food Security' project at UNU-WIDER, published)

Abstract: Nutritional outcomes during childhood are strongly correlated with an individual's total human capital accumulated over his/her life course. Higher levels of human capital are positively associated with an individual's future economic and social well-being. This paper characterizes the determinants of one such dimension of human capital, health. A static conditional health demand function is estimated to capture the role played by child level, household level, and community level factors in determining child health. Micro-level evidence is drawn using data from the three waves (1993, 1997, and 2000) of the IFLS. I find that it is

parent's genetic endowments, household income, and community infrastructure availability that are important for improving child health outcomes. The results from this paper call attention to program and policies that focus on community level infrastructure development and improving access to credit. The coefficient estimates reported in this paper are robust to econometric concerns such as measurement error in income data, correlation between time-invariant household-specific observables and time-invariant community-specific unobservables, and the correlation between community-specific time-invariant unobservables and community infrastructure variables.

Publication

“Role of the Household and the Community in determining Child Health”, WIDER Research paper No. 2007/X, Helsinki: UNU-WIDER

Work in Progress

An Empirical Test of the Dynamic Health Production Function (Preliminary)

Aid and Public Sector in Developing Countries

Invited Conference Presentations and Summer School Participation

Population Association of America, New Orleans, March 2008, (forthcoming)

Northeast Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC), Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 2007

Department of Economics, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, July 2007

Department of Economics, Monash University, Victoria, Australia, July 2007

United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), 2nd Project meeting on ‘Gender and Food Security’, Accra, Ghana, May 2007

United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), 1st Project meeting on ‘Gender and Food Security’, India, December 2006

Association of Pacific Rim Universities Conference, Singapore, July 2006

Bureau for Research and Economics Analysis of Development (BREAD) Summer School Participant, Calgary, Canada, July 2005

Western Economic Association International, San Francisco, California, July 2005

Fellowships and Awards

Fellowship, College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, USC, 2007-2008

Merit Fellowship, College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, USC, 2006-2007

Fellowship Stipend Top Up, College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, USC, 2007

Graduate Assistantship, USC, 2003-2006

Represented USC at the Asia Pacific Rim University (APRU) conference, selected by the provost's office, USC, 2006

Travel award received from the provost's office to present at the APRU conference, USC, 2006

Strategic Theme Summer Supplement, College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, USC, 2005

Merit Fellowship, College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, USC, 2002-2003

Scholarship, Department of Economics, Mumbai University, 2000-2002

Special Research Award, Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT), 2001-2002

Research and Professional Experience

Editorial Assistant, part-time, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, August 2005-August 2006

Project Consultant, part-time, United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), August 2006-May 2007.

Summer Intern, full-time, Food Consumption and Nutrition Division, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), June 2005-August 2005

Summer Intern, full-time, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), June 2001-August 2001

Research Analyst, part-time, 'Jnana Prabodhini', an institute of psychology, June 1998-December 1998.

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Economies of Less Developed Countries, Professor John Strauss, 2005

Teaching Assistant, Contracts, Organizations, and Institutions, Professor Hyeok Jeong, 2005

Head Teaching Assistant, Principles of Microeconomics, Dr. Russell Mangum, 2004

Teaching Assistant, Principles of Microeconomics, Professor Timur Kuran, 2004

Teaching Assistant, Principles of Macroeconomics, Professor Robert Dekle, 2003

Journal Refereeing

Economic Development and Cultural Change

Languages

English (fluent), Hindi (fluent), Tamil (good), Bengali (beginner)

Professional Skills

Econometrics Packages: Stata, Eviews, SAS.

Other Softwares: DAD, Epi-info, Anthro

References

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