

## Centre For Health Economics Seminar Series 2018

### BABY BONUSES AND EARLY-LIFE HEALTH OUTCOMES: USING REGRESSION DISCONTINUITY DESIGN TO EVALUATE THE CAUSAL IMPACT OF AN UNCONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER



Presenter: Stefanie Schurer, University of Sydney  
Date: Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018  
Time: 12.00pm - 1.00pm  
Venue: RB Scotton Room,  
Centre for Health Economics

#### Abstract

We exploit the unanticipated introduction of the Australian Baby Bonus (ABB), a one-off cash transfer of A\$3,000 (US\$2,400) paid to families with a new-born, to investigate the impact of unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) on child health. Using high-quality linked administrative data from South Australia and a regression discontinuity approach, we find that the ABB reduced the number of potentially preventable hospitalisations and number of emergency department presentations for respiratory problems in the first year of life. The impact is economically significant. These findings support the hypothesis that UCTs support families to seek timelier healthcare and avoid more substantial health problems.

#### Presenter

Stefanie Schurer is a tenured Associate Professor in the School of Economics at the University of Sydney. She founded and leads the Economics of Human Development research node at the Charles Perkins Centre. Most of her current projects explore the evolution of skills, preferences, and mental health over the lifecycle and the role that parents, public policy, and the medical care sector play in their trajectory. She is involved in several linked administrative data projects in Australia financed through the National Health and Medical Research Council, evaluating, among others, the impact of early-life medical care and welfare reforms on children's human development. Recently, she received heightened media and government attention for her controversial findings on the negative impact of income management – the key component of the Northern Territory Emergency Response – on Indigenous children's wellbeing. She is also a Chief Investigator in the Prime Minister & Cabinet's LiNTAG project that aims to strengthen the Australian and Northern Territory Governments' shared policy focus on reducing Indigenous disadvantage. Her work has been published in the *Economic Journal*, *Journal of Health Economics*, *Health Economics*, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, and *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, among others. She is an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Economic Behaviour & Organization*. She has won several prestigious early career fellowships including a University of Sydney [SOAR](#) Fellowship and an ARC Discovery Early Career Fellowship. She is a Visiting Scholar at The University of Chicago and a Research Fellow at the IZA Bonn

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