

BROWNBAG SEMINAR

Decision Fatigue in Physicians

By Prof. YE Han (Assistant Professor, Department of Economics)

Abstract:

A recognized problem in administering medical care is physicians' excessive workload. We explore its behavioral consequences from the perspective of decision fatigue—the decline in decision quality due to an increased number of patients and treatment decisions. We use administrative data from over 250,000 visits to an emergency department to analyze how decision fatigue affects physician decision-making and patient outcomes. Controlling for various confounding factors, we find that every 10 patients the physician had previously treated during a shift lowered the index patient's inpatient admission probability by 10.6%, reduced the number of task orders by 10.3%, and shortened the length of stay by 15.7%. Subsequently, both patient revisit rates and mortality rates increased, by 3.0% and 13.3%, respectively. Furthermore, we find that the observed consequences of physician decision-making can be alleviated by taking a break and by accumulated medical experience. These findings suggest that decision fatigue erodes the quality of physician decision-making and impairs patient outcomes, which have important implications on the long-standing debate regarding regulations for healthcare professionals and excessive physician workload.

Date: 13 September, 2022

(Tuesday)

Time: 12:00nn – 1:00pm

Venue: WYL314

****Registration is required**

Register Here:

