President's Message from Winnie Yip

iHEA News is the official newsletter of the International Health Economics Association.

iHEA's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness

Dear iHEA members and colleagues,

I hope that you and your family are keeping safe and well in these trying times. As many of you are aware, the iHEA 2021 Annual Congress is coming up on July 12th through 15th. Though I am disappointed that we won’t be able to meet in person, I am nonetheless very much looking forward to seeing you at our online discussions. I view this year’s Congress as an exciting opportunity to try out new approaches to bringing together our global community and facilitating scholarly exchange across national borders. It is my hope that our format this year enables as much open conversation as possible on the topics being presented. This is why we have chosen to limit each session to one hour and to limit each presenter’s live prepared remarks to just eight minutes. In addition, presenters will provide more detailed presentation materials (e.g., a longer recorded talk or more detailed PowerPoint slides) that will be available to session moderators, as well as all delegates, so as to allow them to offer in-depth commentary and facilitate high-quality debate.

I also want to take this opportunity to share some of the 2021 Congress centerpiece sessions with you. In planning these sessions, we prioritized including a diversity of topics and speakers, while being particularly mindful to focus on topics of relevance to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). On the first day of the Congress, Marcella Alsan (Harvard University), Belinda Archibong (Columbia University), and Gita Sen (Public Health Foundation of India) will comment on the impact of structural discrimination and inequality on health outcomes around the world, with a particular focus on inequalities related to the spread of infectious disease and on the measurement of inequalities between groups. The second day, Michael Kremer (University of Chicago) and Hannah Kettler (GAVI) will present on the economics of vaccine markets, focusing on the ways in which the economics of vaccines do and don’t differ from the economics of other pharmaceuticals, as well as on how access to vaccines can be ensured in LMICs. On day three, Jane Hall (University of Technology Sydney), Susan Cleary (University of Cape Town),
Richard Holden (University of New South Wales), Christian Gollier (Toulouse School of Economics), and Richard Smith (University of Exeter) will discuss the use of economic evaluations to inform pandemic policy, given the unique spillover effects and uncertainties that pandemics introduce. Finally, on the last day of the Congress, Mariana Mazzucato (University College London) will present on new challenges and opportunities for health economics over the next twenty years. These sessions are being scheduled at different times of the day so that all delegates will be able to participate live in some of them, no matter where they are located. Full details of the centerpiece sessions are available on the iHEA website.

As I have mentioned in the past, one of my top priorities as president is to make our association more relevant and useful to scholars from LMICs. In that vein, I am pleased that for the first time, research conducted in an LMIC, Zambia, has won the Arrow Award for the best paper in health economics. My congratulations to Nava Ashraf, Oriana Bandiera, Edward Davenport, and Scott S. Lee for their work on “Losing Prosociality in the Quest for Talent? Sorting, Selection, and Productivity in the Delivery of Public Services.” Furthermore, I am excited by the introduction, this year, of the Adam Wagstaff award recognizing the best iHEA Congress paper on health economics in LMICs authored by an early-career academic from an LMIC. We miss Adam dearly, but we take comfort in honoring his legacy by encouraging more research to improve LMIC health systems and by recognizing the work of promising LMIC scholars.

In addition to the Adam Wagstaff Award, I have also launched a program providing advice, mentorship, and support to early-career researchers from LMICs in organizing presentations for the 2021 iHEA Congress. This is alongside our new series of professional development webinars on topics including “Getting Your First Grant”, “Shaping Your Career Path” and “Interacting with Journals” which aim to increase the support we provide to early-career scholars around the world, and our Student Paper Prizes, which this year went to authors from countries as far-flung as Japan, Canada, and Australia.

I look forward to seeing you in July!

With my very best wishes,
Winnie Yip
President
International Health Economics Association
Arrow Award

The 29th Arrow Award for the best paper in health economics is awarded to:


The Arrow Award Committee is proud to acknowledge the authors of this innovative and informative paper, which investigates whether career benefits for health workers attract talent at the expense of prosocial motivation in Zambia. The professionalization of public service delivery, whereby career professionals replace informal local providers has raised concerns of a possible trade-off between qualifications and skills on the one hand, and intrinsic motivation and local rapport on the other. This study embeds a field experiment in a nationwide health care recruitment in Zambia to test whether career benefits, as measured by the salience of a career in civil service, attract talent at the expense of prosocial motivation. The authors collaborate with the government of Zambia as they formalize primary health care in remote locations.
rural areas by creating a new health worker position in the civil service. Due to the shortage of medical staff, hiring effective agents can potentially make a great difference for the quality of health services and, ultimately, health outcomes in these communities. The study finds that offering career opportunities attracts less prosocial applicants for a new health care position. However, the trade-off exists only at low levels of talent, while at higher levels of talents they are equally prosocial. Those who are hired, who are more talented and equally prosocial, perform better at every step of the causal chain. They provide more inputs: 29 percent more household visits, and twice as many community meetings. They increase facility utilization: the number of women giving birth at the health centre is 30 percent higher, and the number of children undergoing health checks is 24 percent higher, being weighed 22 percent higher, and receiving immunization against polio 20 percent higher. They improve a number of health practices among the households they serve: breastfeeding and proper stool disposal increase, deworming, and the share of children on track with their immunization schedule. These are matched by changes in health outcomes: the share of children under age 5 who are underweight falls by 25 percent. In summary, offering a civil service position with career opportunities attracts workers who deliver services with remarkable health impact. We congratulate the authors on the publication of this important paper.

iHEA’s thanks go to the Arrow Award committee who devote considerable time to reviewing the articles being considered for this award.

Arrow Award Committee, 2021
Chair: Luigi Siciliani, (University of York)
Co-Chair: Tor Iversen, (University of Oslo)

Members:
Marcella Alsan, (Harvard University)
Marika Cabral, (University of Texas)
Jeffrey Clemens, (University of California San Diego)
Luke Connelly, (University of Queensland)
Joan Costa-i-Font, (London School of Economics)
Karine Lamiraud, (ESSEC)
Peter Smith, (Imperial College)
Rodrigo R. Soares, Columbia University)
Mark Stabile, (INSEAD)
Erin Strumpf, (McGill University)
Judit Vall Castelló, (Universitat de Barcelona)
Stephanie von Hinke Kessler Scholder, (Bristol University)
Yuting Zhang, (University of Melbourne)
Annual Student Paper Prize Winners

This year, 27 papers from 15 countries were assessed by the Prize Committee. The 2021 Student Paper First Prize was awarded to: Elaine De Gruyter: "Altruism born of suffering? The impact of an adverse health shock on pro-social behavior". The paper finds that an adverse health shock does not lead to an increase in pro-social behavior, but it does lead to a change in the type of behavior, in terms of type of charities given to, and amounts given. Giving is greatest in the year after the shock.

Elaine De Gruyter is currently undertaking a PhD at the Centre for Health Economics at Monash University (Melbourne, Australia). Her PhD is on investment in public health by the non-government / private sector. She is also a research assistant at the Australian National University where she is undertaking research on innovative financing in social policy.

Honorable mentions go to the runners up, second prize went to: Takanao Tanaka and Shohei Okamoto: "Suicide increase after initial decline amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan". The paper finds suicide rates declined during the initial months of the pandemic, possibly due to government support in terms of subsidies, reduced working hours and school closures. However, during the second wave suicide rates increased, especially among females and young people. As economic support changes, public health may be impacted upon.

Takanao Tanaka is currently an MPhil student in social science at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and will start his Ph.D. at UC Berkeley in Agricultural and Resource Economics in Fall 2021. His research addresses issues at the intersection of environmental and health economics.
Shohei Okamoto is a postdoctoral fellow at the Research Team for Social Participation and Community Health of the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology. He earned his MA (Economics; 2016), MMedSc (Epidemiology; 2017), and PhD (Economics; 2020) from Keio University in Tokyo, Japan.

And third prize to Kisho Hoshi: "Medical Schools, Access to Doctors, and Health Outcomes: Evidence from the One Prefecture, One Medical School Policy in Japan". The paper finds that establishing a medical school increases access to doctors, and mortality falls after new graduates start working at University hospitals. Opening medical schools can help mitigate geographical disparities.

Kisho Hoshi is currently a PhD student at the University of British Columbia and has an MA from the Graduate School of Economics, Hitotsubashi University.

The prize winners will present their papers at a special session of the 2021 iHEA Congress. Many thanks to all those who submitted papers for consideration, and to the Prize Committee for all their hard work. iHEA is particularly grateful to Bruce Hollingsworth, who has chaired the committee since the annual Student Prize was established in late 2016. The next call for submissions will be issued later in 2021.

**Student Prize Committee**

**Chairperson:** Bruce Hollingsworth (Lancaster University, UK)

**Co-Chairperson:** Tinna Asgeirsdottir (University of Iceland)

Mehdi Ammi (Carleton University, Canada)
Monica Aswani (University of Alabama, USA)
Ronelle Burger (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)
Laura Di Giorgio (World Bank)
Toshiaki Iizuka (University of Tokyo, Japan)
Alfredo Paloyo (University of Wollongong, Australia)
William Schpero (Cornell University, USA)
Peter Sivey (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology)
Raf van Gestel (Erasmus University, Netherlands)
Veronica Vargas (Universidad de Chile)
Dominika Wranik (Dalhousie University, Canada)
Important Updates on the 2021 iHEA Congress

Early-bird registration extended
Early-bird registration has been extended to 31 May, 2021. This will allow those who are not presenting in the Congress to view the full program to make an informed assessment of the value of registering for the Congress.
There are many benefits of registering and participating in the Congress, including:

- Exclusive access to all live sessions, which are being structured to allow time for discussion, and will be spread over an extended time period so that no matter where in the world you are located, you will be able to participate in several live sessions each day.
- Access to all materials, such as long version pre-recorded presentations or detailed PPT slides uploaded before live sessions, and recordings of all live sessions for a year after the Congress; you will be able to view any sessions you aren’t able to attend live, and can send questions or comments to presenters via the asynchronous Q&A tool.
- Access to all E-poster presentations.
- Plenty of opportunities for networking; several of the breaks will provide space for engaging with members of Special Interest Groups, for early career researchers to meet with mentors, and general networking opportunities.

Congress centerpiece sessions announced
There will be a centerpiece session on each day of the Congress – please see full details of session content and speakers here.

Scheduling of sessions almost completed
The scheduling of sessions will soon be completed and all registered presenters will be informed of the date and time of their presentation. If you don’t receive an email by the end of the second week May, please check your spam folder … and if you still can’t find anything, please contact claire@healtheconomics.org. The full program will be posted on the website as soon as possible thereafter.
We have made every best effort to schedule your presentation between 8am – 6pm in your time zone. With almost 1000 abstracts to schedule across a 16 hour time frame, this has not been possible for every presentation. We appreciate your understanding if your presentation has been scheduled outside of an 8am – 6pm timeframe.

**Pre-Congress Sessions**

iHEA will be hosting Pre-Congress Sessions the week before the Congress covering a range of topics. We are in the process of finalizing these sessions and times. Further details will be announced once they are finalized.

**Mentoring sessions**

The Early Career Research Special Interest Group (ECR SIG), with support from members of the iHEA Board, will be hosting two mentoring session slots during the main Congress. The two sessions will be held at different times of the day so that it will be possible for ECRs from different time zones to attend one of the sessions.

We will be contacting registered Congress delegates in the near future to identify ECRs interested in joining a mentoring session, and to request experienced health economists to serve as mentors in these sessions. Another good reason to register for the Congress if you haven’t already.

**Webinar News**

**Upcoming Webinars for May**

**Monday, May 3, 2021**

**Webinar: Interacting with journals as an early career health economist**

8AM (ET) / 1PM (UK) / 3PM (Cape Town)

The aim of this webinar is to provide an opportunity for ECRs who are iHEA members to receive advice and tips from experienced scholars and editors on the topic of interacting with journals. The speakers will cover topics such as:

- How to find a good journal match for a research paper
- Useful tips on responding to reviewer’s/editors comments
- How to become a better reviewer

The webinar will last for 60 minutes. There will be three speakers, each speaking for approximately 12 minutes. After each presentation, there will be a couple of minutes for questions. When all three speakers have presented, the webinar participants have an opportunity to ask questions of all three speakers. The webinar will be recorded and the recording will be made available to iHEA members after the webinar.

**Speakers:** Ana Balsa, Anthony Scott, Virginia Wiseman

Hosted by the Early Career Researchers Special Interest Group (ECR)

[REGISTER HERE](#)
Thursday, May 6, 2021
9AM (ET) / 2PM (UK) / 4PM (Cape Town)

This session seeks to contribute knowledge and stimulate discussion on sustainable, efficient and equitable solutions for financing refugees globally.

The session will present evidence from a systematic review describing the range of financing arrangements used to cover the health care needs of refugees, and how these perform in relation to UHC goals.

The session will also include presentations from two diverse country settings where efforts have been made to integrate refugees within domestic financing arrangements: Iran and Uganda.

**Speakers:** Neha Singh, Manal Etemadi and Pallavi Prabhakar

**Hosted by the Health Financing Special Interest Group**

**REGISTER HERE**

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Thursday, May 27, 2021
Webinar: Mental Health Economics: Reflections, Promises and Challenges
11AM (ET) / 4PM (UK) / 6PM (Cape Town)

Professor Knapp will offer some reflections on how economics research in the mental health area – particularly economic evaluation – has developed over the past 40 or so years. This will include some discussion of how the mental health field has received economics evidence and economists; how the ‘end points’ for economic evaluation have changed, in step with health economics developments more generally, but with added complications; how involvement of different stakeholders has changed; and how data availability and preferences have evolved. He will also consider some of the implementation challenges that particularly characterize the mental health area, complicating translation of economics evidence into better policy, practice and lives.

**Speaker:** Professor Martin Knapp

**Hosted by Mental Health Economics Special Interest Group**

**REGISTER HERE**
News on iHEA´s Mentoring Program

Thanks to 35 eligible members of iHEA volunteering as mentors, the second round of the mentoring program was launched in October 2020. In March, a midstream survey was sent to the 35 matched mentor/mentee pairs. The aim of the midstream survey is to offer an opportunity for the participants to reflect on how the mentor/mentee relationship has evolved so far and likewise for the mentoring program team to receive feedback on what is going well and on possible ways to improve the program.

The response rate was 60%. Compared to last year’s survey, mentor/mentee pairs have met more frequently, with 57% meeting twice so far versus 16% last year with the majority meeting via video call. Following an improved promotion of the mentoring resource material, 83% had read/discussed the mentoring handbook vs. 33% last year. Consequently, more participants set goals in this round (63% vs. 36% in the last round), and more report a clear sense of direction. Likewise, more people agreed on action points (83% vs. 50%). On a 0-5 scale, the weighted average for how the mentoring program met participants’ expectations was 4.2 compared to 3.8 last year.

Overall, the program received positive feedback with the main suggestions for improvement concerning a better match on research interest. The mentoring program team will continue to focus on that in future matching of mentor/mentees pairs. For those interested in participating in the next round please have a look at the mentoring program resource material: [https://www.healtheconomics.org/general/custom.asp?page=mentorR](https://www.healtheconomics.org/general/custom.asp?page=mentorR)

Update on iHEA Special Interest Groups

Introducing the Economics of Genomics and Precision Medicine (Econ-Omics) Special Interest Group

Genomic medicine is rapidly changing the diagnostic and treatment paradigm for multiple conditions, including cancer and rare diseases. Over 60 million patients worldwide will undergo genomic testing within the next five years, and governments around the world are currently tasked with implementing genomic medicine into clinical practice. As part of this process, the health economics voice is essential in ensuring that economic evidence is used to inform resource allocation decisions in Genomics and Precision Medicine. This SIG will bring together...
interested researchers around the world to build health economics capacity, advance methods, and facilitate communication and generation of the health economics evidence required to underpin the appropriate widespread use of genomic information in clinical practice.

Conveners: **Ilias Goranitis, James Buchanan** and **Deirdre Weymann** (Founders and Lead Conveners), **Samantha Pollard** (Convener for Research and International Collaboration), **Koen Degeling** (Convener for Communications and Networking), **Zanfina Ademi** and **George Ruhago** (Conveners for LMIC focussed research), **Stuart Wright** (Convener for Organized Conference Sessions), **Thorbjörn Ølafsdóttir** (Convener for ECR/Student Support and Development).

The key objectives of this SIG are to connect researchers, generate ideas through dialogue and academic enquiry, enable research collaboration and dissemination, and support research in low and middle income countries (LMICs) and early career researchers (ECRs). Planned activities include annual symposiums, a regular webinar series, an Econ-Omics blog and quarterly newsletter, and sharing of teaching materials.

Membership is open to all iHEA members interested in the economics of genomics and precision medicine. Membership can be requested by logging into the iHEA website, selecting the "groups" section and clicking "request to join" the Economics of Genomics and Precision Medicine SIG (Econ-Omics). Membership of researchers working in middle- and low-income countries is strongly encouraged as well as of trainees and early career researchers.

To learn more about the SIG and its conveners, visit the [iHEA Website](https://ihea.org) and follow the [Econ-Omics twitter account](https://twitter.com/econoomics).

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