

“Long Term Own and Dynamic Complementarity Effects of the WIC Program”

Presented by Anna Malinovskaya
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Anna is a PhD candidate at Cornell University, who will be on the job market in the 2023-2024 academic year. Her fields of specialization are Public Economics and Applied Econometrics. She is interested in the economics of human capital accumulation and the interactions of human capital accumulation with policy.

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Abstract: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has been in effect since the 1970s. In this project, I estimate the average causal intend-to-treat effects of the WIC program on a range of children’s longer-term outcomes such as educational attainment and economic self-sufficiency in adulthood. My first identification strategy exploits variation across counties and over time from WIC geographical roll-out in the 1970s. For this purpose, I match adult outcomes of individuals in the American Community Survey and Decennial Census 2000 born in the 1970s with their place of birth information in the SSA Numident File and then with the historical data on WIC geographical spread across counties. My preliminary findings from the analysis conducted on each of the two samples (ACS and Census) separately are strikingly similar and indicate that exposure to WIC in-utero raises, on average, the probability of graduating from high school and enrolling in college, with the biggest effects for white males. The second identification strategy uses a regression discontinuity design, which I implement by developing county priority rankings for WIC funding in their state mirroring the approach by officials from the state of Texas, who developed such priority rankings for Texas counties in the early 1970s.

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