



UC Center Sacramento

“What Can History Tell Us About the Potential Long-Run Human Fallout from COVID-19?”

Wednesday, July 28th

12:00 - 1:00pm

In light of the community concerns regarding COVID-19, this talk will be given as a webinar. The link will be provided on July 27th to those that have registered by 5:00 pm on Monday, July 26th at uccs.ucdavis.edu.

What are the long-run human fallout of COVID-19 likely to be—and who will bear the brunt of this crisis? Because the evidence we do have from modern pandemics is largely limited to short-run impacts, recent experience can do little to help us anticipate and respond to COVID-19’s potential long-run consequences for individuals over decades and even generations. History, however, offers a solution. Historical crises offer closer analogues to COVID-19 in each of its key dimensions—as a global pandemic, as a global recession—and offer the runway necessary to study life-course and intergenerational outcomes. In this presentation, I review the evidence on the long-run effects on health, labor, and human capital of both historical pandemics (with a focus on the 1918 Influenza Pandemic) and historical recessions (with a focus on the Great Depression). I conclude by discussing how past crises can inform our approach to COVID-19—helping tell us what to look for, what to prepare for, and what data we ought to collect now.



Dr Vellore Arthi is an Assistant Professor of Economics at UC Irvine. Her work focuses on labor, health, and economic demography, primarily in low-income settings. Her current research falls into two main threads. The first of these studies the role of internal migration as a mechanism through which individuals adjust to and propagate localized shocks. The second explores questions of maternal and child health, early-life development, and human capital formation, particularly as these relate to local environmental, public health, and labor market conditions. In an ongoing NSF-funded project, Arthi and her co-investigators are developing new, comprehensive, high-frequency, and spatially disaggregate data on local economic activity in the US over the past 155 years, data which will be used, among other things, to relieve current bottlenecks to economic knowledge and policy effectiveness, to help lift the veil on critical local dynamics in the development of the American economy, and to better understand the long-run effects of local economic conditions on cohort wellbeing. Arthi holds a doctorate from the University of Oxford, and is a Faculty Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), a Research Affiliate at the Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), and a Faculty Affiliate at the Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA). Prior to joining UC Irvine, she worked at organizations including the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and Deloitte Consulting.

For questions, contact Sandra Wilson at uccstalks@ucdavis.edu

The views and opinions expressed during this lecture are those of the speaker and do not necessarily represent the views of UCCS.