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## 8th Annual EASST Summit: Research Takeaways

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### Impact of Amref Model of Alternative Rite of Passage on Health Outcomes in Kenya

Samuel Muhula, Anthony  
Mveyange

- This study investigates the impacts of an alternative rite of passage (ARP) model rolled out by Amref Health Africa in 2009 to eradicate high rates of female genital mutilation and cutting (FGMC) in Kajiado County in Kenya. Using data from the Kenya Demographic Health Surveys, the study measures rates of female genital mutilation and other outcomes before and after the alternative rite of passage program in Kajiado. These are then compared to the rates of mutilation and the same outcomes in Marsabit, Mander and Wajir counties, which did not have the alternative rite of passage program.
- The study finds that the ARP model reduced rates of FGMC and improved educational outcomes for girls and women compared to Marsabit, Mander and Wajir counties.
- The findings signal the effectiveness and importance of community-led models like the ARP in addressing rampant FMGC practices in Kenya. Further, the ARP model could be scaled up, providing potential benefits throughout Kenya and in other countries.

### Impact of Insecurity on the Ebola Response in the DRC

Vedaste Ndahindwa

- The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been ongoing since August 2018. The current EVD situation in DRC remains of great concern given the complexity of outbreak response in a region with armed conflict.
- Violent attacks have affected the efforts to contain this outbreak, as daily follow up of contacts and of access to care for affected communities remains very challenging.
- This study measures the effect of insecurity in the region on the number of new EVD cases using interrupted time series analysis. The findings suggest that the EVD outbreak will continue to grow as insecurity in the region continues, placing the whole region at high risk for importation.

### The Weakness of Bottom up Accountability in Uganda

Daniel Posner

- The bottom-up monitoring of service providers by community members has been heralded as a particularly promising approach to improving service delivery in developing country settings.
- This study finds that a large-scale, information-focused intervention in the Ugandan health sector aimed at harnessing bottom-up accountability to improve health outcomes had no impact on health outcomes or on utilization rates, and had only weak effects on the quality of care that patients received.
- This is in contrast to an influential earlier study conducted ten years earlier that found strong effects of a nearly identical program. These new findings cast doubt on the power of information to foster community monitoring or to generate improvements in health outcomes, at least in the short term.

## Task Shifting for Initiation and Monitoring of Antiretroviral Therapy for HIV Patients

Jayne Tusiime

- The World Health Organization's (WHO) "Treat All" policy requires an increase in human resources for health (HRH) to initiate HIV-infected persons on antiretroviral therapy. In resource-limited settings, task-shifting is one of the approaches that can be taken to improve HRH.
- A randomized controlled trial in Uganda shows that the care provided by nurses in initiating and monitoring antiretroviral therapy for stable adult HIV patients was not inferior to the care doctors provided.
- The findings support Nurse Initiated and Monitored Antiretroviral Therapy (NIMART) and task-shifting to trained nurses as a means to increased access to antiretroviral therapy.

## Girl's Education and HIV Risk in Uganda

Marcella Alsan

- Uganda is widely regarded as a public health success for curtailing its HIV/AIDS epidemic in the early 1990s.
- To investigate the factors contributing to this decline, this study builds a model of HIV transmission which shows that reduced premarital sexual activity among young women in Uganda resulted in a 14 percentage point decline in HIV.
- This study also explores the reasons why young women changed their behaviour, with findings suggesting that enrolling in secondary education significantly increased the likelihood of abstaining from sex. A significant share of the decline in HIV, among women and overall, can be attributed to a 1990 affirmative action policy giving women an advantage over men on University applications. This has implications for other countries to consider affirmative action policies.

## Banking the Group: The Impact of Linking Savings Groups to Banks in Uganda

Alfredo Burlando

- Over 40% of savers in Uganda rely on Savings Groups for saving or borrowing. However, many groups face liquidity constraints, with members unable to accumulate enough savings to fully meet their financial needs.
- This randomized control trial evaluates a formal bank product, which is one of many similar products available to savings groups in Uganda and elsewhere, that provides access to loans and a saving account to the savings group.
- The study gave savings groups access to a savings account, a savings account and bank loans, or no formal banking services, and reports on the effects of this intervention on outcomes such as access to credit, crowding in/our of other financial products, income and investments, and social cohesion within the savings group.

## Growth-Oriented Agricultural Program and Impacts on Poverty in Ethiopia

Tigist Melesse, Alebel Weldesilassie

- Despite Ethiopia showing substantial economic growth, the country still has one of the poorest per capita incomes at \$783.
- In response to these challenges, the government of Ethiopia introduced the Agricultural Growth Program along with the World Bank to increase the productivity and commercialization of small farmers.
- This evaluation of the Agricultural Growth Program shows that the program positively contributes to smallholders adopting new planting systems, using more modern inputs, starting to raise new cross-breed animals, and following new market channels for agricultural input and output marketing, and increased household consumption and dietary diversity of household members. These factors have had resulted in a significant reduction of poverty.

## The Impacts of Internal Migration on Remaining Household Members: Evidence from Ethiopia

Dagim Belay

- Migration is an important livelihood strategy for many poor households, especially in developing countries, and it remains a salient issue for development policy making in places where rapid rural-urban migration is taking place.
- Using panel data from Ethiopia, this study examines the impact of internal migration on a wide range of outcomes for remaining households.
- The findings suggest that internal migration leads to an increase in consumption expenditure and total income and that migration significantly affects labor allocation in the household. The study also documents that migration of a household member not only lifts households out of poverty, but also reduces the extent and severity of their poverty.

## Getting Girls Back in School: The Returns to Alternative Education in Tanzania

Ketki Sheth

- Despite the high return to education in Tanzania, the majority of girls do not complete secondary school.
- This proposed research aims to evaluate if offering an alternative education can increase QT and O-level completion rates, the two certification examinations for secondary school in Tanzania.
- This research also hopes to evaluate if increased QT and O-level completion rates result in improvements in standard of living, which encompasses factors such as higher wages, reduced fertility rates, and increased health of children.

## Meet your Future: Job Search Efforts and Aspirations of Young Jobseekers

Livia Alfonsi

- In urban labor markets in Uganda, formal sector youth employment rates are below 30%. This randomized controlled trial seeks to evaluate an intervention that consists of meetings between successful alumni and VTI trainees working in the same trade.
- By providing career-coaching and job search assistance to young jobseekers taking their first step in the job market, this study aims to evaluate if these interventions increase the effectiveness of trainees' job search process, support individual-specific potential and abilities, boost trainees' aspirations and self-confidence, reduce information gaps, align expectations with labor market conditions and, ultimately, improve performance on the labor market.
- This is especially relevant for many countries in Sub Saharan Africa that are experiencing a 'youth bulge'.

## Impact of an instructional video for TB case detection in Tanzania

Grace Mhalu, Adrienne Mocello, Marcella Alsan

- Pulmonary tuberculosis is highly prevalent in Tanzania, with 295 cases per every 100,000 people.
- The correct diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis is dependent on the ability of a patient to produce a high-quality and quantity sputum sample. Up to 50% of people infected with pulmonary tuberculosis in Tanzania go undiagnosed, possibly due to a lack of knowledge on sputum production, especially among women.
- This proposed study will evaluate the effectiveness of a clinical instructional video that could help patients to produce sputum samples of the high quality and quantity required for diagnosis, which will increase treatment and reduce the burden of disease in Tanzania.

## Using Observational Data Analysis to Understand the Impact of TB Treatments

Werner Maokola, Chad Hazlett, David Ami Wulf

- This project measures the effect of an ongoing intervention to reduce tuberculosis among HIV positive patients in Tanzania. The intervention used isoniazid preventive therapy (IPT), a widely-used, inexpensive and effective way to prevent tuberculosis. Although all HIV positive patients who visit clinics are eligible to receive this treatment, in practice, it has been selectively prescribed based for unknown reasons.
- This study used a recently developed strategy for estimating the effects of these newly available treatments, without having to randomly choose people to receive the treatment and without depending on covariate adjustment. This approach instead involves looking at how past and present groups of people would compare if no one had received the IPT treatment, and turns these into corresponding estimates of the average effect of IPT, on those who took it.
- The preliminary results show the promise but also the challenges of applying this approach. While this method can provide some information about how effective these treatments are, the research team still needs to do more research to generate conclusive answers.

## The effect of labeling and modern depositing mechanisms on savings behaviour in Ethiopia

Tewodros Tesemma

- Savings rates remain very low in Ethiopia. Only about a third of the country's adult population has access to savings accounts.
- Even among those with bank accounts, presence of substantial transaction costs discourages savings.
- This pilot study investigates whether labeling savings toward specific goals and having access to an automatic transfer option can help to overcome some of these challenges among government employees in Ethiopia.

## The Cost of Political Alignment on the Quality of Public Services: Evidence from Kenya

Michael Mbate

- This study examines how partisanship between Members of Parliament (MP) and the central government affects the completion rates of local development projects in Kenya.
- This study shows that partisanship is associated with more stalled and ghost projects.
- MPs under providing public goods and services are less likely to face parliamentary sanctions.

## Using iBeacons to Track the Distribution of Fertilizer in Kenya

Muthoni Ng'ang'a, Jennifer Hamilton, Daniel Posner

- Leakage and misallocation of development goods undermines the benefit that the goods were designed to bring and may reduce support for development aid in donor countries.
- Technology may be useful in tracking the distribution and leakage of development goods (e.g. use of iBeacon technology to track the distribution of fertilizer in rural Kenya).
- This project will test the viability of the iBeacon technology as a measurement tool for future evaluations intended to generate policy-relevant lessons about the types of interventions that have the greatest effects on improving targeting.

## OUR WORK

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