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Labor and Population Program Working Papers

1995

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-01 DRU-939	Research on Aging Using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics	<i>Lee A. Lillard</i>	January 1995

This paper serves the dual purpose of evaluating the current PSID survey and making recommendations for change in future waves to further enhance its value for research on aging.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-02 DRU-955-RC	Restrictions on Medicaid Funding of Abortion: Effects on birth Weight and Pregnancy Resolutions	<i>Janet Currie Lucia Nixon Nancy Cole</i>	January 1995

Previous research suggests that restricting the availability of abortion reduces average birth weight by increasing the number of unhealthy fetuses that are carried to term. In this paper the authors use data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth to extend this literature in two ways. First, most previous studies have estimated the probability that a pregnancy is carried to term, and then used these estimates to calculate "selection corrections" that are included in models of birth weight. The authors focus instead on reduced form models of birth weight that are not affected by under-reporting of abortion, and that do not involve strong identifying restrictions. Second, the authors explore the potential endogeneity of abortion laws by comparing jurisdictions with abortion restrictions to jurisdictions where restrictive laws have been passed but are enjoined by the courts.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-03 DRU-956	Regulating Child Care: The Effects of State Regulations on Child Care Demand and Its Cost	<i>V. Joseph Hotz M. Rebecca Kilburn</i>	January 1995

In this paper, the authors examine the effects of existing *state-level* child care regulations on the cost, or price, of non-parental child care, the demand for (non-parental) child care by parents, and the mother's decision to enter the labor force. We distinguish between the indirect effects of regulations on demand via their effect on the cost of such care facing parents as well and the direct (and non-price) effects regulations may have by imposing standards in the form of minimum levels of quality on available care facing parents. In our empirical analysis, we analyze the child care decisions of *all* parents with preschool age children, including households with working *and* non-working mothers, using child care data from the 1986 wave of the National Longitudinal Survey of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS72). We present estimates of the effects of two sets of regulations—namely, restrictions on child-to-staff ratios in day care centers and educational and/or training requirements of workers in either centers or home day care setting—as well as two types of child care subsidies—child care tax credit for working mothers and subsidies to providers—on the child care and maternal work decisions of households as well as on the hourly cost of child care. Our

evidence indicates that state regulations both increase the cost of child care as well as have direct (non-price) effects on utilization but that their total effect tends to reduce the utilization of market-based child care, especially among households with non-working mothers. Since economically disadvantaged and black women are disproportionately represented in the latter group, it appears that one of the consequences of regulations are to deter the utilization of child care by households with children for whom the purported developmental benefits of organized day care might be most beneficial.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-04 DRU-962-NICHD	Underfunding and Liberal Retirement Benefits Among State and Local Government Workers	<i>Richard W. Johnson</i>	January 1995

This paper finds evidence that the relative generosity of pensions among state and local government workers can be explained by the ability of taxpayers to underfund public employee retirement plans. Since underfunding can reduce the tax burden of mobile taxpayers who expect to leave the community before retirement benefits are paid, governments have an incentive to offer their employees compensation packages with generous, but poorly funded, pensions. Combining individual-level data from the Current Population Survey with state-level pension plan provisions collected from state statutes, a recursive system of equations characterizing pension underfunding levels and pension benefits is estimated. The results indicate a strong, positive relationship between underfunding levels and taxpayer mobility. In addition, predicted levels of underfunding significantly increase annual increments to individual pension wealth and the ratio of these increments to current earnings.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-05 DRU-988-NIA	Improving the Quality of Economic Data: Lessons from the HRS	<i>F. Thomas Juster</i> <i>James P. Smith</i>	February 1995

Important strides have been made in recent years in our understanding of the determinants of levels, accumulation, and portfolios of wealth. While the issues examined are extremely diverse, they are linked by a common need for reasonably reliable wealth and savings data to test their basic implications. Unfortunately, the quality of the wealth modules in current survey data fails to meet that need. In this paper, the authors argue that some relatively simple survey innovations used in the recently fielded Health and Retirement Survey (HRS) may go a long way toward significantly improving the quality of economic data. These innovations involve the option of bracket responses given to respondents who initially refused or were unable to provide an exact value for their assets or income. These bracket categories not only substantially reduced item non-response, but they also greatly improved the accuracy of imputations of missing economic data. Equally important for testing economic models about the motives underlying savings behavior, the size of the bias is not uniform across ages. Existing surveys distort the age wealth profile by understating wealth in the pre-retirement years relative to the post-retirement years by more than 10 percent. HRS survey innovations are easily transported to other surveys and would, at relatively low cost, substantially improve the accuracy of their economic data.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-06 DRU-989-NIA	Wealth Inequality Among Older Americans	<i>James P. Smith</i>	February 1995

One of AHEAD's primary objectives was to monitor the process of asset accumulation and depletion at older ages. Our current knowledge of this process is limited because most social science surveys did not include wealth modules, or assets were notoriously poorly measured in these surveys. This problem is an order of magnitude more severe during the post-retirement years due to woefully inadequate sample sizes in this age group. As a result, we have not yet established convincingly the basic facts around which the scholarly and policy debate should be grounded. Do most older Americans have adequate financial resources to maintain a decent standard of living? Do they deplete their previously accumulated resources as they age as the prominent life-cycle model contends? How many of them plan to leave significant financial bequests to their heirs? To address these questions, this paper examines wealth levels and distributions using the recently release AHEAD Survey.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-07 DRU-1036-RC	Public Policy and Anthropometric Outcomes in the Côte d'Ivoire	<i>Duncan Thomas</i> <i>Victor Lavy</i> <i>John Strauss</i>	March 1995

The impact of public policies on three anthropometric outcomes, height and weight for height of children and body mass index of adults, is examined using survey data from the Côte d'Ivoire. Reduced availability and quality of health care services, together with increases in the relative price of foods, which accompanied economic adjustment programs in the 1980s, adversely impacted the health of Ivorians. Basic services, such as immunizations and being equipped with simple materials, such as common drugs, is associated with improved child health. Higher food prices have had a significantly detrimental impact on the health of both children and adults.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-08 DRU-1055-NIA	Marriage, Assets, and Savings	<i>James P. Smith</i>	March 1995

This paper explores the relationship between household type and asset accumulation. Households are distinguished principally along standard demographic lines—whether they marry, divorce, separate or become widowed. Recently, new data have become available that place far more emphasis on the breadth and quality of asset measurement. One of these new surveys—the Health and Retirement Survey (HRS)—is ideal for depicting the nature and magnitude of wealth disparities across households. Wealth is one of the core modules, and, as a result, considerable survey resources and time were spent in improving the quality and inclusiveness of the asset information collected. Unfortunately, at the current time only baseline HRS data are available. To model the dynamic process of household accumulation, the 1984 and 1989 wealth modules of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) are used.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-09 DRU-1057	Transfer Behavior Within the Family: Results from the Asset and Health Dynamics Survey	<i>Kathleen McGarry</i> <i>Robert F. Schoeni</i>	March 1995

Economists have recently begun to examine the pattern of financial transfers within families. Both the prevalence and magnitude of such transfers shed light on the motivation behind these and other economic behaviors. Recent papers have focused the discussion of transfers into a debate between altruism and exchange as motivations for the observed behavior. In the context of transfers from parents to children, altruism assumes that a child's utility is an argument in his parent's utility function. Thus, parents transfer resources to children if the child's marginal utility of consumption (appropriately weighted) is greater than the parent's own marginal utility of consumption. One of the predictions of altruism is that the parent will reduce the amount of transfers given to his child if the child's consumption increases. Conversely, an exchange motive views transfers as a payment for services provided by the child to the parent. Unlike the prediction of the altruism model, the exchange model does not necessarily predict that the parent will reduce transfers to her child in response to an increase in the child's consumption. The motivation behind transfer behavior has important implications for the effectiveness of government programs. Empirical evidence has been found to support each of the two hypotheses. In this paper the authors provide new empirical evidence on the relationship between the income of the recipients and the likelihood and magnitude of cash transfers using the Asset and Health Dynamics Survey of the Oldest Old (AHEAD). The paper offers strong evidence that respondents are more likely to make transfers and more likely to transfer larger amounts to their less well off children. Contrary to earlier studies, the authors do not contradict an altruistic model of behavior. Furthermore, they present descriptive statistics which cast some doubt on the exchange model and find little if any evidence of an exchange of services for financial compensation.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-10 DRU-1063- NIA/NICHD	Race, Socioeconomic Status, and Health in Late Life	<i>James P. Smith</i> <i>Raynard Kington</i>	April 1995

This paper examines race and ethnic disparities in health outcomes among older Americans using the two important new data sets—the Health and Retirement Survey (HRS), and the Asset and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old (AHEAD). The paper's main sections are: (1) the implications of the principal economic model that has been used to analyze health outcomes; (2) a description of racial differences in a variety of health outcomes; (3) a brief summary of the income and wealth health-gradients obtained from the data; (4) the racial and ethnic differences in health risk factors; and (5) a summary of a series of empirical models of self-assessed health status.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-11 DRU-1089-NICHD	Health, Wealth, and Wages of Men and Women in Urban Brazil	<i>Duncan Thomas</i> <i>John Strauss</i>	May 1995

Survey data indicate that different dimensions of health affect the wages of men and women in urban Brazil. Height has a large and significant effect on wages: Taller men and women earn more. Body mass index is associated with higher wages of males, especially among the less-educated, suggesting that strength may be rewarded with higher wages. Low levels of per capita calorie and protein intakes reduce wages of market-workers, but not the self-employed. After controlling for height, BMI and calories, the influence of proteins is greater at higher levels, presumably reflecting the impact of higher quality diets.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-12 DRU-1093-NICHD	Poverty, Public Assistance and Children in Intact and Single-Mother Families	<i>Lingxin Hao</i>	May 1995

This paper examines the effects of poverty, public assistance and family structure on school-age children's home environment and developmental outcomes using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. The central question of this study is whether public support negatively affects school-age children's developmental outcomes, thereby contributing to the intergenerational transmission of welfare dependency. The results show that long duration and late timing of poverty have a detrimental effect on home environment and child developmental outcomes. Long duration of public assistance disturbs reading ability for children of intact families only. Late timing of public assistance actually enhances the cognitive and emotional environment, with a greater effect on emotional environment for single-mother families. Long duration and late timing of single motherhood are detrimental to the emotional environment. Taken together, the findings of this paper suggest that the process of intergenerational transmission of welfare dependency during school-age years is primarily due to poverty and single motherhood rather than the duration and timing of public assistance.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-13 DRU-1094-RF	Community Characteristics, Individual and Household Attributes, and Child Survival in Brazil	<i>Narayan Sastry</i>	May 1995

This paper presents an analysis of the relationship among community characteristics, household attributes, and child survival in Brazil. The principal objectives are to investigate how the social and environmental context in which a child is raised affects his or her survival chances, and to analyze how household variables serve to modify the effects of community characteristics. The ultimate goal of the study is to understand the role played by community characteristics in shaping child mortality differentials in a developing country context. We focus on both interregional and socio-economic differentials and find that community characteristics emerge as important covariates. Our study of interaction effects between household variables and community characteristics provides a deeper understanding of the effects of community characteristics on child survival chances by illuminating the most likely paths through which these covariates operate. This information is also useful for predicting who is most likely to benefit from public policies to improve community infrastructure, education, and health care.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-14 DRU-1096-NICHD	A Review of Abortion Policy: Legality, Medicaid Funding, and Parental Involvement, 1967-1994	<i>Jon F. Merz</i> <i>Catherine A. Jackson</i> <i>Jacob A. Klerman</i>	May 1995

This paper attempts to document the history of abortion legality and two abortion policies—Medicaid funding of abortion for indigent women, and the requirement for parental involvement in a minor's abortion decision. The paper has three sections. The first section briefly summarizes the U.S. Supreme Court decisions that set the Constitutional boundaries of state actions regarding abortion legality, Medicaid payment for abortion for indigent women, and the requirements for the involvement of minors'

parents in the abortion decision. The second and main section of the paper provides a documented state-by-state review. The third and final section summarizes this review (including figures graphically describing the status of each policy by state through time) and presents some concluding comments.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-15 DRU-1101-RC	A Multilevel Hazards Model for Hierarchically Clustered Data: Model Estimation and an Application to the Study of Child Survival in Northeast Brazil	<i>Narayan Sastry</i>	June 1995

In this paper the author presents a multivariate proportional hazards model for data that are clustered at two hierarchical levels and apply it to the study of the covariates of child mortality in Northeast Brazil. The model provides corrected parameter estimates and standard errors—as well as estimates of intra-group correlation of survival times at both levels—with survey data collected via a hierarchically clustered sampling scheme, such as the data from Northeast Brazil that are analyzed in this paper. The model accounts for the hierarchical clustering in the data by including two random-effects or frailty-effects. We assume that the two random-effects are independent, and that each follows the gamma distribution. The parameters of the hazard model and the mixing distributions are estimated using the expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm. We use the incomplete data log-likelihood function to calculate standard errors. Our results indicate that family and community clustering effects in Northeast Brazil are fairly small in magnitude, but are of importance because they alter parameter estimates and standard errors in a systematic pattern.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-16 DRU-1124-NIA	Does Supplemental Private Insurance Increase Medicare Costs?	<i>Lee A. Lillard</i> <i>Jeannette Rogowski</i>	July 1995

The Medicare program was created in 1966 to provide for the health care needs of the elderly. Due in part to the failure of the program to cover certain services such as prescription drugs, the market for private supplemental insurance developed rapidly. In addition, employers found that retiree health benefits were an inexpensive form of deferred compensation to offer workers. The emergence of private insurance to supplement Medicare, while providing insurance for uncovered services, also decreased the price sensitivity of elderly consumers for services that were covered by Medicare. This in turn has induced demand for covered services beyond those that would have existed if Medicare were the only insurance available to the elderly. In this paper, the authors estimate the magnitude of induced Medicare expenditures due to the presence of private supplemental insurance. They use a unique source of data, the 1990 Health Supplement to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. This data contains linked Medicare claims for elderly PSID respondents from which direct measures of expenditures for Medicare-covered services have been created. In addition, due to the panel nature of the PSID (23 consecutive years) we have instruments that permit controls for the potential endogeneity of the purchase of private supplemental insurance. Therefore, we are able to distinguish induced expenditures due to insurance from higher expenditures due to potential selection effects of persons purchasing private insurance. These estimates are the first to be able to measure the induced demand effect of private supplemental insurance on Medicare program expenditures. As such, they provide a quantitative measure of how the private sector may induce significant expenses in public programs.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-17	Intergenerational Earnings	<i>Lee A. Lillard</i>	July 1995
DRU-1125-NIA	Links: Sons and Daughters	<i>M. Rebecca Kilburn</i>	

The authors explore the mobility of income across generations for daughters as well as sons in Malaysia, using detailed retrospective earnings data for both generations—fathers, sons and sons-in-law—and exploiting data on multiple children per family. The earnings link for sons is similar to that in the United States, and links for daughters are just as strong. Because of the importance of the child's education as a determinant of earnings, the authors further explore the role of father's earnings and parents' education as correlates of the education of children and of sons-in-law. Both father's permanent earnings and his position in the earnings cycle when a child is investing in education are important. The authors also find that educational outcomes of sons, sons' wives, daughters, and daughters' husbands share a common unobserved component implying that not only are the unobservables in a family linked, but also that the unobservables are linked between children of other families who have married into a family.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-18	Updating Women's Life Course:	<i>Dawn M. Upchurch</i>	July 1995
DRU-1135-NICHD	Theoretical and Methodological Considerations	<i>Lee A. Lillard</i> <i>Constantijn W. A. Panis</i>	

Using Merton's framework of theory and empirical research reciprocity, the authors illustrate the implications of recent empirical innovations in life course methodology for life course theory. They focus on three key premises: (1) the life course is dynamic in nature; (2) lives are structured along trajectories; and (3) trajectories are interrelated. The authors present an overview of current life course theory, followed by a specific application of Merton's theory of reciprocity. They then explore and test these premises using several empirical examples with data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. They conclude with recommendations for future empirical research and theoretical advances in women's life course.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-19-1	Race, Children's Cognitive	<i>Janet Currie</i>	September
DRU-1178-1-NICHD	Achievement and the Bell Curve	<i>Duncan Thomas</i>	1995

In *The Bell Curve*, Hernstein and Murray demonstrate that a mother's score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test is a powerful predictor of her child's score on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). The authors replicate this finding for PPVT and two related tests. However, even after controlling for AFQT, there are significant gaps in PPVT scores which suggest that AFQT is not all that matter. In fact, both maternal education and income are important determinants of child test scores, and their influences differ dramatically with the test, the child's age, and the child's race. These racial gaps in test scores are important because, even within families, children with higher scores are less likely to repeat grades. Moreover, background also affects grade repetition even after controlling for child test scores and maternal AFQT. Next, the authors move beyond AFQT and examine the effects of individual Armed Services vocational Aptitude Battery sub-tests on children's scores. The authors find that those skills that are rewarded in the labor market are not always the same skills that are associated with improved child outcomes. An understanding of the relationship between different aspects of maternal achievement and child outcomes may help unravel the complex process through which poverty is transmitted across generations.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-20 DRU-1232-RC	Discrete Choice Estimation of Price-Elasticities: The Benefits of a Flexible Behavioral Model of Health Care Demand	<i>William H. Dow</i>	October 1995

Previous literature on discrete health care demand estimation has used a wide range of different specifications, and results may be sensitive to model choice. This paper advocates a flexible behavioral model of discrete choice health care demand which nests previous models, enabling them to be structurally interpreted as well as tested against one another. Based on testing of data from Côte d'Ivoire, it is found that certain recognized restrictions on income variables appear to have little impact on results. However, the specification of the price variable can have large impacts on policy inferences. The flexible model ameliorates this sensitivity, and allows structural interpretation when the data rejects more restrictive models.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-21 DRU-1233-RC	Welfare Impacts of Health Care User Fees: A Health-Valuation Approach to Analysis with Imperfect Markets	<i>William H. Dow</i>	October 1995

Despite large investments in determining the demand effects of raising health care user fees in developing countries, there has been little *welfare* analysis of user fees. Conventional wisdom assumes that the more that user fees discourage demand, the worse is a user-fee policy. This paper shows that this conventional wisdom is contradicted by neoclassical analysis. It is then argued that empirically resolving these conflicting predictions using standard consumer surplus measurement is inadequate. This is because market imperfections make individual private revealed values potentially different from actual social benefits. An alternative "health-valuation" approach to social welfare measurement is proposed here instead. This involves a reorientation of analyses towards direct measurement of health outcome effects, which is argued to be the preferred research strategy.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-22 DRU-1234-RC	Unconditional Demand for Curative Health Inputs: Does Selection on Health Status Matter in the Long Run?	<i>William H. Dow</i>	October 1995

Healthy people are routinely ignored when analyzing curative health inputs. This practice overlooks people's long-term ability to affect their chances of falling sick, and may have perverse effects on welfare analyses. A dynamic model implies that input demand estimates conditioned on current illness can only be interpreted as *short run* effects, in contrast to the long-run nature of unconditional estimates. In addition, conditional estimates may be biased from both sample-selection, and self-reporting of health status. By jointly modeling discrete choices for health inputs and health outcomes, a test for selection bias is derived using the multinomial probit. In data from Côte d'Ivoire, it is found that the usual short-run demand estimates do not suffer from selection bias. However, these conditional estimates differ from the easily estimated long-run unconditional effects, which are often the more relevant policy parameters.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-23	Health, Nutrition and Economic Development	<i>John Strauss</i>	October
DRU-1238-NICHD/NIA		<i>Duncan Thomas</i>	1995

The relationship between health and economic development is explored, focusing on nutrition-based health indicators. The spotlight is placed on the inter-related feedbacks between the influence of health on productivity, on one hand, and the influence of income on health status, on the other. Disentangling causality in these relationships has preoccupied much of the literature; the authors evaluate different empirical strategies that have been adopted and assess the results. There is now a body of evidence based on careful empirical studies that demonstrates a causal relationship between health and labor productivity; there is also evidence that, at least among the very poor, additional income is spent on improved nutrition. There are two issues that have received little attention although, the authors argue, they are likely to be very important. First, measurement of health is discussed in detail. Evidence is presented on how taking into account differences in the extent of measurement error is critical for interpreting the impact of health on wages. The same theme emerges in studies of the effect of income on health (specifically calorie intake). The key role of non-linearities in these relationships is highlighted, and the authors demonstrate that a good deal of the variation in estimates of income elasticities of demand for calories can be ascribed to the role of measurement and functional form.

Number	Title	Author	Date
WP 95-24	Labor Supply Effects of State	<i>Jacob Alex Klerman</i>	December
DRU-1260-NICHD	Maternity Leave Legislation	<i>Arleen Leibowitz</i>	1995

This paper develops a theory of the labor supply effects of maternity leave statutes. The theory predicts that both employment and leave will increase with the passage of maternity leave legislation, but the direction of the legislation's effect on work is ambiguous. The authors test these hypotheses using data from the 1980 and 1990 census. The results are sensitive to the controls for state and year effects and the controls for the characteristics of sampled women. The estimates provide some evidence that maternity leave statutes increased leave, but had insignificant positive effects on employment and work.

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<u>Series Number</u>	<u>Order Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
95-25	DRU-1275-RC	<i>Abstracts of 1995 Labor and Population Program Working Paper Series</i>	
95-24	DRU-1260-NICHD	<i>Labor Supply Effects of State Maternity Leave Legislation</i>	Jacob Alex Klerman Arleen Leibowitz
95-23	DRU-1238-NICHD/NIA	<i>Health, Nutrition and Economic Development</i>	John Strauss Duncan Thomas
95-22	DRU-1234-RC	<i>Unconditional Demand for Curative Health Inputs: Does Selection on Health Status Matter in the Long Run?</i>	William H. Dow
95-21	DRU-1233-RC	<i>Welfare Impacts of Health Care User Fees: A Health-Valuation Approach to Analysis with Imperfect Markets</i>	William H. Dow
95-20	DRU-1232-RC	<i>Discrete Choice Estimation of Price-Elasticities: The Benefits of a Flexible Behavioral Model of Health Care Demand</i>	William H. Dow
95-19-1	DRU-1178-NICHD-1	<i>Race, Children's Cognitive Achievement and the Bell Curve</i>	Janet Currie Duncan Thomas
95-18	DRU-1135-NICHD	<i>Updating Women's Life Course: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations</i>	Dawn M. Upchurch Lee A. Lillard Constantijn W. A. Panis
95-17	DRU-1125-NIA	<i>Intergenerational Earnings Links: Sons and Daughters</i>	Lee A. Lillard M. Rebecca Kilburn
95-16	DRU-1124-NIA	<i>Does Supplemental Private Insurance Increase Medicare Costs?</i>	Lee A. Lillard Jeannette Rogowski
95-15	DRU-1101-RC	<i>A Multilevel Hazards Model for Hierarchically Clustered Data: Model Estimation and an Application to the Study of Child Survival in Northeast Brazil</i>	Narayan Sastry
95-14	DRU-1096-NICHD	<i>A Review of Abortion Policy: Legality, Medicaid Funding, and Parental Involvement, 1967-1994</i>	Jon F. Merz Catherine A. Jackson Jacob A. Klerman
95-13	DRU-1094-RF	<i>Community Characteristics, Individual and Household Attributes, and Child Survival in Brazil</i>	Narayan Sastry
95-12	DRU-1093-NICHD	<i>Poverty, Public Assistance and Children in Intact and Single-Mother Families</i>	Lingxin Hao

95-11	DRU-1089-NICHD	<i>Health, Wealth, and Wages of Men and Women in Urban Brazil</i>	Duncan Thomas John Strauss
95-10	DRU-1063-NIA/NICHD	<i>Race, Socioeconomic Status, and Health in Late Life</i>	James P. Smith Raynard Kington
95-09	DRU-1057	<i>Transfer Behavior Within the Family: Results from the Asset and Health Dynamics Survey</i>	Kathleen McGarry Robert F. Schoeni
95-08	DRU-1055-NIA	<i>Marriage, Assets, and Savings</i>	James P. Smith
95-07	DRU-1036-RC	<i>Public Policy and Anthropometric Outcomes in the Côte d'Ivoire</i>	Duncan Thomas Victor Lavy John Strauss
95-06	DRU-989-NIA	<i>Wealth Inequality Among Older Americans</i>	James P. Smith
95-05	DRU-988-NIA	<i>Improving the Quality of Economic Data: Lessons from the HRS</i>	F. Thomas Juster James P. Smith
95-04	DRU-962-NICHD	<i>Pension Underfunding and Liberal Retirement Benefits Among State and Local Government Workers</i>	Richard W. Johnson
95-03	DRU-956	<i>Regulating Child Care: The Effects of State Regulations on Child Care Demand and Its Cost</i>	V. Joseph Hotz M. Rebecca Kilburn
95-02	DRU-955-RC	<i>Restrictions on Medicaid Funding of Abortion: Effects on Birth Weight and Pregnancy Resolutions</i>	Janet Currie Lucia Nixon Nancy Cole
95-01	DRU-939	<i>Research on Aging Using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics</i>	Lee A. Lillard

1994

<u>Series Number</u>	<u>Order Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
94-28	DRU-977-RC	<i>Abstracts of 1994 Working Paper Series</i>	
94-27	DRU-886-NICHD	<i>Using Private Health Insurance to Reduce and Better Target Public Expenditures</i>	Paul Gertler Roland Sturm
94-26	DRU-852-NIA/WFHF	<i>Ethnic Differences in Parents' Coresidence with Adult Children in Peninsular Malaysia</i>	Angelique Chan Julie DaVanzo
94-25	DRU-864-NIA	<i>The Impact of Human Capital Investments on Pension Benefits</i>	Richard W. Johnson
94-24	DRU-853-NICHD	<i>Public Policies, Private Support and Single Mothers' Schooling, Work, and Child Care</i>	Lingxin Hao Arleen Leibowitz

94-23	DRU-841-WFHF/RF	<i>Areal and Socioeconomic Differentials in Infant and Child Mortality in Cameroon</i>	Barthelemy Kuate Defo
94-22	DRU-823-NIA	<i>The Impact of Regulation and Financial Incentives on Cost-of-Illness</i>	Dana P. Goldman Paul J. Gertler James P. Smith
94-21	DRU-783-NICHD	<i>Targeting Low Birthweight Interventions in Jamaica</i>	John W. Peabody Paul J. Gertler
94-20	DRU-795-NICHD	<i>Demographics, Sectoral Change, and Changing Relative Wages: A Regional Approach</i>	Lynn A. Karoly Jacob Alex Klerman
94-19	DRU-771-NICHD	<i>Explaining Changes in Recent Mothers Labor Supply</i>	Arleen Leibowitz Jacob Alex Klerman
94-18	DRU-764-NICHD	<i>Simultaneity in the Timing of Marriage, Cohabitation and Non-Marital Fertility</i>	Lee A. Lillard Michael J. Brien
94-17	DRU-763-NICHD	<i>Interdependencies Over the Life Course: Women's Fertility, Marital, and Educational Experiences</i>	Lee A. Lillard Constantijn W. A. Panis Dawn M. Upchurch
94-16	DRU-762-NIA/NICHD	<i>Panel Attrition from the PSID: Household Income, Marital Status, and Mortality</i>	Lee A. Lillard Constantijn W. A. Panis
94-15	DRU-760-NICHD	<i>Social Inequality and Children's Growth in Guatemala</i>	Anne R. Pebley Noreen Goldman
94-14	DRU-427-1-NICHD	<i>Do Women's Early Work Commitment and Welfare Attitudes Predict Employment After Childbirth?</i>	Lisa Greenwell Arleen Leibowitz Jacob Klerman
94-13	DRU-741-NICHD	<i>Parents' Demand for Child Care</i>	Anne S. Johansen Arleen Leibowitz Linda J. Waite
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