To view this email as a web page, go here.

J-PAL
ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB
NORTH AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
October 2024

Good afternoon,

This Friday (November 1) marks the beginning of the open enrollment period for the federal health insurance marketplace and many state marketplaces. As co-chairs of J-PAL North America's Health Care Delivery Initiative, we are using this moment to reflect on our mission to improve access to and usage of health care through evidence-informed policies in the United States. We are excited to share updates in this October newsletter for HCDI and other J-PAL initiatives.

This month, HCDI published an updated version of our Evidence Wrap-Up. First published in 2020, this new version captures the most up to date evidence from randomized evaluations on interventions in health care delivery. The wrap-up is meant to serve as a resource for researchers and practitioners who are seeking rigorous evidence on strategies that can improve health care and health outcomes for all Americans. We are excited by the range of interventions and partners represented in the evidence base, a testament that randomized evaluations are feasible and useful in answering research questions in many contexts.

We are also thrilled to feature new results from the Baby's First Years study conducted by J-PAL affiliated professors Lisa Gennetian (Duke), Greg Duncan (UC Irvine), and their coauthors. This study is evaluating the impact of unconditional cash transfers on early childhood development and health outcomes through long-term data collection and monitoring of mothers and their children. The new paper found that children in the treatment group had higher produce consumption at age two, but by age three there were no statistically significant differences on nutrition, sleep, and other health outcomes.

In this month's newsletter, we also feature a new video on our work with housing choice vouchers and a new post on the J-PAL blog about positionality: the idea that a researcher's position in society and their identities can influence how they approach and carry out their research. We invite you to share these resources and funding opportunities with your colleagues and networks, and join us in our mission of finding equitable, effective solutions to poverty alleviation.

Sincerely,
Amy Finkelstein and Marcella Alsan
Co-chairs of the Health Care Delivery Initiative, J-PAL North America

Photo credit: Shutterstock

Featured Policy Publication: Updated Health Care Delivery Initiative Evidence Wrap-Up

Our Health Care Delivery Initiative (HCDI) works to find solutions that make health care more efficient, effective, and equitable. Randomized evaluations are one of the most powerful tools we have to determine if a health policy or program is achieving its goals. In our newly updated Evidence Wrap-Up, we showcase key results from HCDI-supported randomized evaluations, covering topics such as the impact of workplace wellness programs and the health and financial effects of relieving medical debt. Learn more about the current evidence »
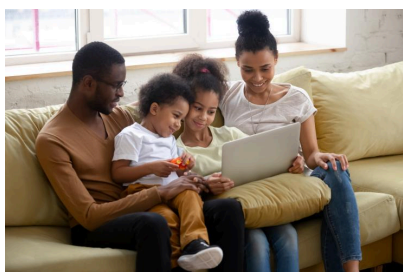

Photo credit: Shutterstock

Evidence to Scale: Providing school quality information to improve housing mobility for low-income families

In a new video, Michael Lazdowsky from AffordableHousing.com (a rental listing website for rental voucher recipients formerly known as GoSection8) and Lorry Henderson from GreatSchools discuss their partnership with J-PAL affiliated professor Peter Bergman (UT Austin) and coauthors

to evaluate the impact of providing information about school quality to families using housing choice vouchers. After the evaluation found that information about local schools increased moves to neighborhoods with higher-performing, less-segregated schools, the partners took action. Watch the video to learn more about the evidence and subsequent scale up efforts »

Exploring the role of positionality in economics research

Photo credit: J-PAL North America

As part of J-PAL North America's goal to increase racial diversity and generate research on racial equity in the field of economics, the Racial Equity Advisory Committee recommended that we incorporate positionality statements from researchers submitting to our Request for Proposals. However, the field of economics has limited experience in acknowledging how a person's identities and positions in society influence how they approach and conduct research. On the J-PAL blog, we spoke with J-PAL North America Co-Scientific Director Matt Notowidigdo (UChicago), J-PAL North America Scientific Advisor for Racial Equity Damon Jones (UChicago), the co-chair of J-PAL's education sector and humanitarian protection initiative, Sule Alan (Cornell University), and Shanyce Campbell (University of Pittsburgh) to determine how we might approach positionality within a quantitative research setting. Check out our new webpage on researching racial equity for more »
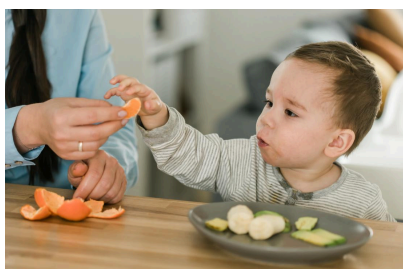

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY

Photo credit: Shutterstock

The impact of unconditional cash on child health, nutrition, and sleep of young children in the US

Children living in poverty experience higher rates of injury, chronic illness, poor sleep, and utilization of emergency health services compared to children in US higher-income families. The J-PAL-supported study

Baby's First Years seeks to understand how poverty alleviation affects child development. Researchers randomly assigned new mothers to receive an unconditional cash transfer of $333 per month (high-cash gift group) or $20 per month (low-cash gift group). In a new paper , researchers found that children in the high-cash gift group had higher produce consumption at age two than children in the low-cash gift group, but no reduction in sweets and sweetened beverages, and no group differences on maternal assessments of children's health, sleep, or healthcare utilization at age three.

FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE

Photo credit: Shutterstock

Why common balance tests are over-indicating imbalance in randomization and what to do about it

In a recently published working paper, J-PAL affiliated professor Jason Kerwin (University of Washington), J-PAL invited researcher Olivier Sterck (University of Antwerp), and J-PAL MENA alumna Nada Rostom (University of Antwerp) present a comprehensive analysis of how standard balance tests used in randomized evaluations indicate imbalance too often, over-rejecting the null hypothesis that the treatment and comparison groups are, on average, balanced on observable characteristics. On the J-PAL blog , we spoke with the authors to learn more about their research process, what they found, and what they recommend researchers do to more effectively test for balance across treatment groups after randomization.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Researcher-Provider Partnerships Can Help Identify Effective Solutions For Homelessness
Next City

Support Us

Have an idea of content you would like to see in this newsletter? We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback to J-PAL North America Policy and Communications Manager, Erin Graeber.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This email was sent by: J-PAL

400 Main Street, Cambridge, MA, 02142 US

About J-PAL   **Privacy Policy**   **Update Profile**   **Unsubscribe**