Craig McIntosh
School of International Relations & Pacific Studies
University of California, San Diego

Presents,

The Heterogeneous Effects of HIV Testing

Abstract: Voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) is considered one of the pillars of HIV prevention. Numerous studies suggest that learning one’s HIV status leads to reductions in risky sexual behaviors, especially among those who test HIV-positive. However, most of these studies either rely on non-experimental designs or self-reported data, or both. We analyze the impact of a randomly assigned VCT intervention on the subsequent prevalence of Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV-2), a biomarker of risky sex, among young women in Malawi. We find that receiving an HIV-positive test causes a substantial increase in the probability of contracting HSV-2, with stronger effects among those who reported no chance of being infected with HIV at baseline. This finding challenges the conventional wisdom that those who learn they are HIV-positive will adopt safer sexual practices. We also find that VCT affects broader behaviors: those receiving an HIV-negative test result have a significant improvement in achievement test scores if they reported some chance of being infected with HIV at baseline.

Date: Thursday March 7th 2013
Time: 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Venue: IBS Meeting Room, 155 B

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