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RESEARCH STATEMENT

I am an applied microeconomist working at the intersection of labor, health and household economics. A part of my research also involves using molecular genetics data to study economic outcomes. I investigate understudied topics related to older adult populations. Many countries are facing a rising share of older demographics, yet our current understanding of geriatric behavior remains limited in critical areas. For instance, while behaviors like saving for retirement has been extensively studied, much less is known about marital stability at older ages. Indeed, much of the economics literature has focused on marriage and divorce decisions at younger ages. This gap is concerning because older adults can have different incentives and constraints on marital choices versus younger couples. Similarly, mental health conditions are also underdiagnosed in present older populations. This is largely due to limited awareness and stigma in the past, restricting our understanding of the impacts on their lives. My projects addresses these gaps by examining how financial factors and the genetic risk of having a mental health condition influences partnership stability and economic outcomes in later life. Filling these voids will have important implications for the well-being of the aging populations. This research also has policy implications regarding social security and other programs targeting older adults.

My job market paper examines the relationship between changes in household wealth and the divorce among older American adults. Late-life divorces have risen in the past couple of decades, necessitating research on the determinants of "gray divorce". Using panel data on adults over 50 from the Health and Retirement Study, I first establish descriptive associations between wealth and likelihood of relationship dissolution. Evidence points towards the presence of a non-linear relationship – households facing more extreme changes in wealth are more likely to dissolve their relationship as compared to those facing more moderate changes. To isolate the causal effects, I use plausibly exogenous shocks to wealth and find evidence that they indeed lead to dissolution. However, I find little evidence of any non-monotonic causal effects of wealth shocks. Descriptive associations can reflect spurious correlations driven by unobservables that jointly affect wealth and marital quality. In contrast, the exogenous shocks better identify the causal effect by isolating changes in wealth itself. Therefore, the absence of detectable non-linear impacts provides cleaner evidence that the true causal relationship may be linear, at least within the range of the observed shocks.

This research contributes to the literature on marital stability by focusing on older adults when constraints and motivations diverge from those earlier in the lifecycle. Financial shocks have well-documented impacts on divorce among younger couples, but less is known about effects on older unions amid retirement, health declines, and shifting family roles. This has implications fir the vast literature on financial security among older couples which often ignores

possible endogenous changes in marital arrangements. Such indirect effects could potentially have large welfare consequences.

Research on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), a common mental health condition, has focused almost exclusively on children and young adults, resulting in limited understanding of ADHD in older populations. This knowledge gap is concerning given ADHD often persists across the lifespan. However, data limitations and underdiagnosis have severely constrained study of ADHD in later life. In two separate projects, I study the relationship between ADHD and economic outcomes using two different methods.

First, I study whether genetic propensities for ADHD affects the hazard rate for divorce of the present older adults when they were young. Studying the association between mental health conditions like ADHD and marital outcomes in older populations is difficult. Stigma may be greater among this cohort, reducing the accuracy of the self-reports. Furthermore, the group of older adults who are willing to discuss mental health openly (or seek treatment) may be heavily selected. Rather than using self-reports or diagnosis data, I instead use a weighted index of genetic markers that significantly predict ADHD. The genetic risk score provides a novel proxy for hard-to-observe ADHD tendencies. This study makes several contributions to understanding how ADHD behaviors may destabilize marriages. Leveraging genetic risk provides a view of ADHD's influence on marital stability free of biases from simultaneity, and reverse causality that plague research relying on clinical diagnoses. The findings also provide unique evidence that ADHD genetic risks may lead individuals to respond differently to shifts in social norms governing divorce. More broadly, the use of genetic data to study "invisible" traits that impact social outcomes opens new possibilities for causal inference on hard-to-measure factors like personality, risk preference, and more.

In a separate project, my co-authors and I develop an innovative methodology to predict ADHD in a large sample of older adults, providing a view of ADHD that is absent in existing data. We generate predicted ADHD probabilities for respondents in the Health and Retirement Study based on observable information. This approach addresses the systematic underdiagnosis of ADHD among older individuals. Leveraging these predicted probabilities, we examine ADHD's association with key economic outcomes in later life. The results provide some of the first evidence that ADHD significantly impacts labor supply, earnings, and wealth accumulation for older adults. Our methodology not only sheds light on these economic consequences, but also demonstrates the promise of predictive techniques to recover information missing in survey data. Given aging populations worldwide, understanding ADHD in older groups has growing policy relevance. More broadly, this study showcases innovative analytics to uncover lifelong impacts of difficult-to-measure conditions.

Going forward, I expect my research to continue engaging with topics relating to the linkages between different life cycle outcomes for older adults. On one hand, I aim to delve deeper into the nuances of family structure and the interplay between late-life relationship dynamics and other key economic outcomes like labor supply, household finance, and health. On the other hand, I plan to broaden the scope and extend my analyses to aging populations in

developing countries as well. Investigating these underexplored connections across different contexts aligns with my goals of advancing our understanding of older adults globally.

Among projects are that are in more preliminary stages, I am estimating the match quality of the present older American couples. Structural models can uncover nuanced information about the late-life relationship dynamics that reduced-form approaches cannot. These demographic trends also beg the question of whether there are any intergenerational effects – indeed there are papers that link parental divorce with increased probability of adopting non-traditional relationship choices among children, but little is known about the mechanisms that can be at play. This is another project that is in my pipeline. Moving away from developed countries to developing counterparts, I am also interested in investigating if there are any gendered differences in responses to self-reported health questions. Such measures are critical to understanding health behaviors and are often used in analyses involving large-scale datasets. Exploring the possibility of heterogeneous responses, driven by gender norms will open new avenues to understanding how the latter affects economic outcomes. At present, most of the studies on gender norms are limited to children and young people – relatively less is known about what happens to older adults.