

Hannah Wich

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Address: 271 Heady Hall, 518 Farmhouse Lane, Ames Iowa 50010

Education

Ph.D. – Economics at Iowa State University *Expected Spring 2023*

Fields of Interest: Public, health, and applied microeconomics

B.S. – Economics & Mathematics at University of South Dakota *May 2018*

Working Papers, Work in Progress & Research Experience

Job Market Paper: SNAP Adoption and Big Box Purchases

Purchases over the SNAP Benefit Cycle: Evidence from Supermarket Panel Data
With *Dr. Harris-Lagoudakis*

Consumer food purchase behavior and the COVID-19 pandemic
With *Dr. Conlin, Dr. Harris-Lagoudakis, Cara Haughey and Seung Jung*

Partial Identification and COVID-19 (Work in Progress)
With *Dr. Kreider and Dr. Zhylyevskyy*

Policy Reports: Harris-Lagoudakis, K. and H. Wich. "The SNAP Disbursement Schedule and its Effects." *CARD Agricultural Policy Review*. Fall 2021.

Workshop: 2022 NBER Health Care Bootcamp, University of California at Berkeley

Research Assistant for Dr. Harris – Lagoudakis Fall 2020 – Summer 2022

Research Assistant for Dr. Kreider Fall 2020 – Summer 2021

Presentations: ISU Labor-Public Economics Workshop, Missouri Valley Economic Association (October 2022), Universidad ORT Uruguay (2022), Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (2021), Iowa State University Econometrics Reading Group (2021)

Teaching Experience & Awards

Awards: Iowa State Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award

Principles of Microeconomics **Co-instructor**, SP 2022 (with Dr. Harris - Lagoudakis)
Principles of Micro- and Macroeconomics **TA**, FA 2018- FA 2019; SP 2020; FA 2022

Workshop: Addressing microaggressions in the learning environment April 2022
ISU Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Professional Experience & Other

Intern, Ernst & Young, International Tax Services – *Summer 2017* Eschborn, Germany

Intern, Evonik Industries, Financial Controlling – *Summer 2015* Hanau, Germany

Languages: English (fluent), German (native)

Software: R, Stata, Latex, Microsoft Suite

Citizenship: Germany

Former Division-1 Athlete at the University of South Dakota

References

Brent Kreider Professor Iowa State University bkreider@iastate.edu	Katie Harris-Lagoudakis Assistant Professor Iowa State University kaharris@iastate.edu	Helen Jensen Professor Iowa State University hhjensen@iastate.edu	Chad Cotti Professor UW - Oshkosh cottic@uwosh.edu
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Job Market Paper: SNAP Adoption and Big Box Purchases

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) issues monthly lump-sum payments. In theory, these payments help households overcome liquidity constraints and allow households to purchase bulk items. Purchasing products in bulk sizes decreases unit price and can increase consumption while holding expenditures constant. Using novel retailer panel data, this study investigates the effect of participating in SNAP on bulk purchasing behavior. First, I show that SNAP households can save a considerable amount of money by purchasing bulk relative to non-bulk items. To estimate a causal relationship between SNAP participation and bulk purchases, I use the timing of program recertification as a source of exogenous variation in the decision to participate in SNAP. I find that adopting SNAP increases the expenditure share of bulk purchases for all groceries by five percentage points. This finding suggests that relaxing budget constraints enables households to exploit savings from shopping efforts that require lump-sum liquidity. Investigating Ready To Eat (RTE) cereal and yogurt purchases shows that households shift their expenditures toward food categories that encourage bulk purchases. However, the inter-purchase time for RTE cereal does not change upon SNAP adoption, providing evidence that SNAP households are not stockpiling bulk purchases for future needs.

Purchases Over the SNAP Benefit Cycle: Evidence from Supermarket Panel Data

Joint with Dr. Harris-Lagoudakis

This paper investigates the effect of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit disbursement on intramonthly household level purchases made from a supermarket retailer. Using variation in the timing of benefit receipt, we find that food spending in week one of the benefit cycle is 27 percent higher than week four of the benefit cycle. However, we find little evidence for cyclicalities in the healthfulness of food purchases. This paper also compares and contrasts estimates that use variation in the indicator for benefit receipt (benefit receipt estimates) to estimates that utilize variation in the probability of SNAP benefit receipt (likelihood of benefit receipt estimates). Likelihood of benefit receipt estimates have become increasingly popular due to data limitations present in many data sets. We find that the likelihood of benefit receipts are statistically distinguishable from and 2.1 to 2.8 times larger than benefit receipt estimates for the outcome of spending. For measures of healthfulness, we continue to find discrepancies between the two sets of estimates; however, the estimates are often statistically indistinguishable from each other. We decompose the difference between the two sets of estimates and find that all of the difference is due to endogenous measurement error, present only in the likelihood of benefit receipt estimate. We provide guidance to researchers in the event that only the likelihood of benefit receipt is known.

Consumer food purchase behavior and the COVID-19 pandemic

Joint with Dr. Conlin, Dr. Harris-Lagoudakis, Cara Haughey and Seung Jung

In this paper, we use transaction data from a large grocery store retailer to describe changes in grocery shopping behavior throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We analyze both store- and household-level changes in the number of transactions, the amount of spending on groceries, and the purchase channel. Finally, we study changes in the healthfulness of grocery transactions using three different healthfulness metrics. Given the disproportionate effects of the pandemic, we look at how behavior changes vary by demographics such as race, age, and income. We find that in general, households increased their spending and decreased their number of transactions early in the pandemic, and households increased their reliance on online shopping during the pandemic. However, households adopted these behaviors differentially based on their demographics. Further, we find small changes to the overall healthfulness of grocery store purchases.