

# Helen L. Kissel

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CONTACT INFORMATION	Stanford Department of Economics 57 Jane Stanford Way Stanford, CA 94305	+1(978) 821-7645 <a href="mailto:hkissel@stanford.edu">hkissel@stanford.edu</a> <a href="http://www.helenkissel.com">www.helenkissel.com</a>
EDUCATION	<b>Stanford University</b> , Stanford, CA Doctor of Philosophy, Economics	2019-Present
	<b>University of Toronto</b> , Toronto, ON Master of Arts, Economics Doctoral Stream	2016-2017
	<b>Colorado College</b> , Colorado Springs, CO Bachelor of Arts, Mathematical Economics	2012-2016
ACADEMIC REFERENCES	<b>Ran Abramitzky</b> Professor, Department of Economics, Stanford University <a href="mailto:ranabr@stanford.edu">ranabr@stanford.edu</a>  <b>Maya Rossin-Slater</b> Professor, Department of Health Policy, Stanford University <a href="mailto:mrossin@stanford.edu">mrossin@stanford.edu</a>  <b>Petra Persson</b> Professor, Department of Economics, Stanford University <a href="mailto:perssonp@stanford.edu">perssonp@stanford.edu</a>  <b>Heidi Williams</b> Professor, Department of Economics, Dartmouth College <a href="mailto:Heidi.Lie.Williams@dartmouth.edu">Heidi.Lie.Williams@dartmouth.edu</a>	
WORKING PAPERS	<b>Understanding Variation in Cesarean Section Use: Supply-Side Drivers and Maternal Health Effects (Job Market Paper)</b> <i>with Helena Roy</i> A longstanding concern in U.S. healthcare is the large regional variation in spending and treatment intensity, often unaccompanied by improvements in outcomes. We explore this issue in the context of Cesarean sections (C-sections), the most performed inpatient surgery. Notably, C-section rates differ up to 10-fold across hospitals, with significant variation even for clinically similar patients. We use Medicaid administrative claims data, covering 42% of all births in the US, to quantify the contribution of the primary supply-side agents in healthcare—physicians and hospitals—to variation in C-section use. Leveraging variation from physicians who perform deliveries at multiple hospitals, we find that differences in physician practice style across hospitals can explain approximately one quarter of the across-hospital differences in C-section usage. This variation in physician practice style has important implications for patient health. Patients quasi-randomly assigned to more C-section-intensive physicians have a significantly higher probability of unplanned C-sections, and these marginal C-sections are associated with worse postpartum maternal health outcomes without measurable benefits to newborns. Our findings highlight physician practice style as an important driver of C-section use with direct consequences for maternal health.  <b>Patient Mix and Provider Experience: Racial Disparities in US Maternal Health</b> <i>with Helena Roy</i> Maternal health in the US is poor relative to peer countries and evidences strong racial disparities. In particular, Black patients in the US often face a heightened incidence of pregnancy complications, such as preeclampsia. A potential instrument for reducing disparities is physician training in	

patient heterogeneity by race. Residency provides the bedrock for specialist practice in obstetrics and gynecology, and could be a valuable training period in which to highlight race-specific risks and considerations. In this paper, we examine existing variation in residency training and ask if racial disparities in treatment use and outcomes are evident within residency, based on the practice of their alumni. We find small effects of residency on treatment use and outcomes for patients of all races. Notably, a residency's relative effect on C-section use and delivery complications is not strongly correlated across Black versus White patients, suggesting non-uniform learning across different patient groups. We also examine if training at a residency with a more diverse patient mix — a feature advertised by multiple residencies as an important part of physician education—impacts physicians' deviation from clinical consensus in delivery method diagnosis. Though we document that such deviations are more likely for Black patients, we find essentially no impact of training with a diverse patient population on this racial gap.

## SELECTED RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

### **Birth Centers and Maternal and Infant Health**

*with Ambar La Forgia, Petra Persson, Maya Rossin-Slater and Helena Roy*

### **Willingness to Pay for Concordance in Healthcare**

*with Tamri Matiasvili and Helena Roy*

### **Shell-Shocked: Long Run Consequences of Wartime Stress**

*with Boaz Abramson*

## RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS & INTERNSHIPS

**Cause Prioritization Intern**, Open Philanthropy

2022

[Report on tobacco control.](#)

**Research Assistant for Daniel Fetter**, Stanford Economics

2021-2022

**Research Assistant for Heidi Williams**, Stanford Economics

2020

**Predocutorial Research Fellow for Ran Abramitzky and Leah Boustan**

Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research

2017-2019

[Code and documentation webpage.](#)

## MENTORSHIP & SERVICE

**Teaching Assistant Coordinator**, Stanford University

2023-2025

**BING Honors College Graduate Student Mentor**, Stanford University

2024, 2025

**Economics Honors Thesis Mentor**, Spelman College

2021-2023

**Wellness Information Network Representative**, Stanford Economics

2021-2023

**Graduate Student Social Chair**, Stanford Economics

2020-2021

## TEACHING ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE

### **Stanford University Department of Economics:**

ECON 155: Environmental Economics and Policy

Fall 2021, Winter 2023

ECON 144: Family and Society

Winter 2022

ECON 113: Historical Perspectives on Inequality and Opportunity in America

Spring 2022

ECON 15Q: The Economics of Immigration In the US

Winter 2018

### **University of Toronto:**

Undergraduate Microeconomic Theory

Winter 2016, Spring 2017

## GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, & AWARDS

**Ely Graduate Fellow**, Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research

2025

**Shultz Research Grant**, Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research

2024

**Centennial Teaching Assistant Award**, Stanford University

2023

**Spectrum PHS Pilot Grant**, Stanford University

2022-2023

**Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award**, Stanford University  
**Stanford Graduate Fellowship in Science & Engineering**  
**University of Toronto Fellowship**  
**Phi Beta Kappa**, Colorado College

2021, 2022, 2023  
2019-2022  
2016-2017  
2016

ADDITIONAL  
INFORMATION

**Citizenship:** United States, Canada