

Monica Alexander

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Education

Ph.D (Demography), **University of California, Berkeley**, 2018.

Dissertation title: Bayesian Methods for Mortality Estimation.

Committee: Josh Goldstein (chair); Ken Wachter; Dennis Feehan; Jas Sekhon.

M.Arts (Statistics), **University of California, Berkeley**, 2015.

M.Social Research (Demography), **Australian National University**, 2013.

B.Science (First Class Honors) (Math and Chemistry), **University of Tasmania**, 2008.

Professional Experience

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Graduate Student Researcher

January 2017 – current

As a member of a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded project, I am developing a model to estimate subnational populations of women of reproductive age. This will help to improve monitoring of family planning indicators in regions where data are sparse or difficult to collect in low-income settings.

World Health Organization

Consultant

September 2016 – June 2017

In collaboration with the Department of Health Statistics and Information Systems, I created a framework to help understand and inform modeling decisions on estimating national health indicators.

Data Science for Social Good

Fellow

May 2016 – September 2016

In consultation with Tulsa Public Schools in Oklahoma, I formulated a predictive machine learning model to help identify students who were at risk of not reaching third grade reading levels.

Human Mortality Database

Graduate Student Researcher

January 2015 – May 2016

I was the lead researcher in developing a Bayesian model to estimate age-specific mortality rates at the subnational level. I also investigated methods for visualizing diagnostics of quality of mortality data.

UNICEF Technical Advisory Group

Consultant

March 2014 – July 2015

In collaboration with Leontine Alkema, I formulated a model to estimate neonatal mortality rates for all UN-member countries. This model is now used by UNICEF to produce official estimates of neonatal mortality.

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

Research Officer

April 2012 – December 2014

As part of a small research team, I researched Australian Indigenous policy in health, employment and education contexts. We produced research and policy briefs for the Indigenous Affairs department in the Australian Government.

Reserve Bank of Australia

Analyst/Senior Analyst

February 2010 – June 2013

My research involved developing statistical models to estimate and predict the volume of counterfeit banknotes in circulation, as well as designing a new sampling framework to assess the quality of banknotes in circulation.

Papers

Peer-reviewed articles

Alexander, M., Kiang, M.V. and Barbieri M., ‘Trends in Black and White Opioid Mortality in the United States, 1979–2015’, forthcoming, *Epidemiology*.

Alexander, M., and Alkema, L., ‘Global Estimation of Neonatal Mortality using a Bayesian Hierarchical Splines Regression Model’, *Demographic Research*, 2018, 38(15): 335–372.

Alexander, M., Zagheni, E., and Barbieri, M., ‘A Flexible Bayesian Model for Estimating Subnational Mortality’, *Demography*, 2017, 54(6): 2025–2041.

Howlett, M., Gray, M., and Hunter, B., ‘Wages, government payments and other income of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians’, *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 2016, 19(2): 53–76.

Hunter, B., **Howlett, M.**, and Gray, M., ‘The Economic Impact of the Mining Boom on Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians’, *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 2015, 2(3): 517–530.

Gray, M., **Howlett, M.**, and Hunter, B., ‘Labour Market Outcomes for Indigenous Australians’, *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 2014, 25(3): 497–517.

Biddle, N., **Howlett, M.**, Hunter, B., and Paradies, Y., ‘Labour Market and Other Discrimination Facing Indigenous Australians’, *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 2013, 16(1): 91–113.

Other published papers

Hunter, B., **Howlett, M.**, and Biddle, N., ‘Modelling Exposure to Risk of Experiencing Discrimination in the Context of Endogenous Ethnic Identification’, *IZA Discussion Paper #8040*, March 2014.

Gray, M., Hunter, B., and **Howlett, M.**, ‘Indigenous Employment: A Story of Continuing Growth’, *CAEPR Topical Issue 2/2013*, Australian National University, Canberra.

Current working papers and manuscripts in progress

Alexander, M., ‘Temporal smoothers for use in demographic estimation and projection.’, monicaalexander.com/pdf/temporal_smoothing.pdf.

Alexander, M., and Goldstein, J., ‘Deaths without denominators: using a matched dataset to study mortality patterns in the United States.’
monicaalexander.com/pdf/bayesian_censoc.pdf.

Alexander, M., and Alkema, L., ‘A Bayesian hierarchical model for estimating subnational female populations in developing countries.’

Alexander, M., and Kiang, M.V., ‘Seasonality in suicide deaths and unintentional opioid overdoses in the United States.’

Kiang, M.V., **Alexander, M.**, Zhang, Z., and Chen, J., ‘The spatial distribution of opioid mortality by race in the United States, 1999-2015.’

Zagheni, E., Polimis, K., **Alexander, M.**, Weber, I., and Billari, F., ‘Combining Social Media Data and Traditional Surveys to Estimate and Predict Migration Stocks.’

Teaching Experience

University of California, Berkeley

<i>Instructor</i> , Formal Demography Workshop	June, 2017
<i>Instructor</i> , Formal Demography Workshop	August, 2015
<i>Graduate Student Instructor</i> , Demographic Methods	Fall Semester, 2014

University of Tasmania

<i>Tutor</i> , Calculus and Applications I	Semester 1, 2009
<i>Tutor</i> , Data Handling and Statistics I	Semester 2, 2008
<i>Demonstrator</i> , Chemistry I	Semester 1, 2008

Other

<i>Instructor</i> , Introduction to Causal Inference, ITAM	March, 2017
<i>Instructor</i> , IUSSP Workshop on social media data and demography	August, 2016

Presentations

Conference presentations

Alexander, M., and Alkema, L., A Bayesian hierarchical model for estimating subnational populations of women of reproductive age. Institute of Disease Modeling Symposium: Seattle, WA (April 2018) and PAA Annual Meeting 2018: Denver, CO (April 2018).

Alexander, M., Temporal Smoothers for use in Demographic Estimation. IUSSP 2017: Cape Town, South Africa (October 2017).

Alexander M., Barbieri M., and Kiang M.V., Opioid-related deaths by race in the United States: Trends and patterns in multiple causes of death. PAA Annual Meeting 2017: Chicago, IL (April 2017).

Goldstein, J.R., and **Alexander, M.**, Towards a New, Public Data Set for Studying Mortality Inequality: Matching the 1940 U.S. Census With Social Security Death Records, 1963-2011. PAA Annual Meeting 2017: Chicago, IL (April 2017).

Alexander, M., Zagheni, E., and Barbieri, M., A Flexible Bayesian Model for Estimating Subnational Mortality. PAA Annual Meeting 2016: Washington, DC (April 2016) and European Population Conference 2016: Mainz, Germany (August 2016).

Alexander, M., and Alexander, R., Mothers returning to study. International Conference on Population Geographies. Queensland, Australia (June 2015).

Alexander, M., Estimating Neonatal Mortality. PAA Annual Meeting 2015: San Diego, CA (April 2015).

Goldstein, J.R., and **Howlett, M.**, Tempo and the economy: decomposing the effect of economic shocks on births into tempo and quantum. European Population Conference 2014: Budapest, Hungary (August 2014).

Howlett, M., Social and Cultural Determinants of the Self-Assessed Health of Indigenous Australians. PAA Annual Meeting 2014: Boston, MA (April 2014) (Poster).

Invited talks

Modeling and Understanding Mortality Disparities. Department of Sociology, *University of Washington, Seattle* (November 2017); Department of Statistics, *University of Toronto* (December 2017); and School of Demography, *Australian National University* (December 2017).

Teach-outs: Causal Inference; and Data Visualization, *Data Science for Social Good Fellowship* (June and July 2017).

Temporal Smoothers for use in Demographic Estimation. Statistics working group, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst* (February 2017)

A Flexible Bayesian Model for Estimating Subnational Mortality. Statistics working group, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst* (November 2016); Bayesian working group, *University of Washington, Seattle* (May 2016); and Demography brown bag, *University of California, Berkeley* (March 2016).

Global estimation of neonatal mortality. *UNICEF Inter-agency Group on Mortality Estimation, Technical Advisory Group*. (March, April and May 2014).

Honors

Doctoral Completion Fellowship (*UC Berkeley*) 2017-2018

Elizabeth Scott Memorial Award (*UC Berkeley*) 2015
Statistics MA student showing the most promise in statistical research.

Regents-Intern Fellowship (*UC Berkeley*) 2013-2015

Lado Ruzicka Prize in Social Research (*Australian National University*) 2013
Awarded to the most outstanding Master of Social Research candidate.

W.D. Borrie Prize (*National essay competition, Masters category*) 2012
For best student paper on a population-related topic.

University Medal (*University of Tasmania*) 2008
One of three awarded to the most outstanding Science and Technology undergraduates.

Edith Rita Lowenstern Prize (*University of Tasmania*) 2008
Awarded to the most outstanding mathematics honors student.

Premier of Tasmania National Scholarship (*University of Tasmania*) 2005-2008
One of four undergraduate scholarships awarded to outstanding secondary school students.

Australian Student Prize (*National award*) 2004
For academic excellence in secondary school. One of 500 awarded nationally, and 13 awarded to Tasmanian students.