

# Wei Yang Tham

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## Citizenship and Visa Status

Singapore (F-1 visa)

## Education

Ph.D. Economics, The Ohio State University, 2019 (expected)  
Dissertation: "Essays in Labor Economics and Innovation"  
Committee: Bruce A. Weinberg, David M. Blau, Kurt J. Lavetti  
M.A. Economics, The Ohio State University, 2014  
B.A. Economics, Rice University, 2013

## Research Fields

Labor Economics, Economics of Science and Innovation

## Teaching Fields

Labor Economics, Applied Econometrics, Economics of Science and Innovation

## Research Papers

Science, Interrupted: Budget Uncertainty and Its Effects on Innovation (**Job Market Paper**)  
Given the importance of innovation to economic growth and the substantial role of government funding in modern science, understanding how policy uncertainty can affect innovation is vital. I make progress on this question by focusing on how uncertainty over a funding agency's budget can interrupt the flow of funding to research projects. Using transaction-level data on NIH-sponsored projects, I study the effect of funding interruptions on innovative activity. I find that researchers respond to the uncertainty from funding interruptions by reducing spending in the months leading up to the expiry of funding. Spending is substantially lower in the first month after funding resumes but recovers within 2 months, suggesting that interruptions have a disruptive effect on research even when funds become available. These findings suggest that the timing of funding is an important factor for agencies to consider when they make research awards.

## Research in Progress

The Effect of Temporary Colocation on Knowledge Flows: Evidence from NIH Study Sections  
Short-term interactions between people are thought to play an important role in overcoming frictions to knowledge diffusion. I estimate the effect of temporary colocation on knowledge flows using a setting where colocation is plausibly exogenous. I define a pair of scientists to be colocated if they serve together as grant reviewers on an NIH study section. Using variation in the timing of when reviewers serve on a study section, I find that short-term interactions lead to an increase in citations between pairs of scientists. The effect persists up to 10 years after the scientists' initial meeting and increases with the number of interactions that they had. This suggests that familiarity with, and not just awareness of, another scientist is an important factor in knowledge diffusion.

## The Effect of Targeted Increases in Science Funding: Stem Cell Research in California (w/ Joseph Staudt)

In 2004, California allocated \$3 billion over 10 years towards stem cell research in response to federal funding restrictions. We evaluate the effects of this policy using the synthetic control method and find that California produced 20% more stem cell-related publications than a control state following the policy's implementation. Using citation- and text-based metrics, we find little evidence that the average California publication had a higher impact or became more innovative. However, the increase in research volume alone increased California involvement at the frontier of stem cell research, relative to control states.

## White Paper

### Measuring Innovation in Science (NBER-IFS White Papers on the Value of Medical Research)

I provide an overview of recent efforts to measure outcomes such as scientific novelty and impact using citation networks and text analysis.

## Research Experience and Other Employment

2015-present      The Ohio State University, Research Assistant for David Blau and Bruce Weinberg

## Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships

2017-2018      Pre-doctoral Fellow (\$10,000), NBER-IFS Value of Health Research Network

2013-2014      University Fellowship, Graduate School at The Ohio State University

## Teaching Experience

Fall 2017      ECON 2367.02 Economic Issues in the United States, The Ohio State University, Independent Instructor

Fall 2016      ECON 2002.01 Principles of Macroeconomics, Teaching Assistant for Professor Darcy Hartman

Fall 2014      ECON 2001.01 Principles of Microeconomics, Teaching Assistant for Professor Ida Mirzaie

## Presentations

2018      Department of Economics, SUNY Albany (forthcoming)

2018      Census AIRis Brown Bag (forthcoming)

2018      13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Urban Economics Association

2018      Value of Medical Research Network Meeting

2018      Value of Medical Research Pre-Doctoral Meeting

2018      Society of Labor Economists (SOLE) Annual Meeting (poster)

2018      Midwest Economics Association Conference

2017      Value of Medical Research Pre-Doctoral Meeting

## Skills

R, Git, Stata, Matlab

## Languages

English (native), Chinese (fluent)

## References

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