

The economics of infectious diseases

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Syllabus

Overview

This course surveys 60 years of the economic literature on infectious diseases, starting with the Hirschleifer report to the Rand corporation in 1966 to the economic research tsunami on the COVID-19 from 2020. The early literature on the impact of epidemics on the development process is also studied through the lenses of economic history and Unified Growth Theory. Also the impact of the enduring AIDS-HIV epidemics is deeply analysed, stressing the induced inequality dynamics and development paths. Last but not least, a review of the most recent epidemiological-economic (epi-econ) literature is provided together with some related open research questions.

Contents (6 lectures, 2 hours each)

- 1. Early economic epidemiology approaches:** From the disaster approach to the AIDS-HIV crisis through the fetal origin hypothesis
- 2. Epidemics and long-term development:** Lessons from economic history and from the Unified Growth Theory
- 3. Health, mortality, inequality and development:** Lessons from the AIDS-HIV crisis
- 4. Early epidemiological-economic (epi-econ) literature:** Foundational papers, basic epi-econ structures, and a few extensions
- 5. The tsunami of the Covid-based epi-econ literature:** From central planner problems to (somehow) micro-founded epi-econ models
- 6. New directions in the epi-econ stream:** Extensions to incorporate uncertainty, mental health, strategic interactions...etc

Some selected references

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