Western SocialScience | Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST)

Using Response Time Data from Social Science Surveys to Model Cognition and Cognitive Decline

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NEST SPEAKER SERIES

2–4pm
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Refreshments to be provided

Social Science researchers are increasingly interested in cognitive aging and its relationship to other life events. Most longitudinal datasets have no or limited direct measures of cognition. Using the National Social, Health and Aging Project (NSHAP) we show that the time it takes to answer questions measuring cognition is highly correlated with measured levels and declines in cognition. These measures are also highly correlated with 5 year mortality. Data on the time to answer questions is routinely captured as a by-product of computer assisted interviewing yet it is rarely used by the social science research community. Our results suggest a large amount of useful information is likely contained within most social science surveys that has to date gone unused and may be useful for modeling the aging process.

Seth Sanders specializes in the fields of economics and public policy. His research focuses specifically on four different lines of study, which include the trends of race and gender in relation to earnings among the highly educated; the effects of extreme economic changes on workers and families; the performance of gay and lesbian families within the economy; and the economic consequences of teenage childbearing.