

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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NAME: Caputi, Theodore L.

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login):

POSITION TITLE: PhD Candidate in Economics

EDUCATION/TRAINING *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA	BS	08/2017	Economics
University College Cork, Cork, Ireland	MPH	02/2019	Advanced Epidemiology
University of York, York, UK	MSc by Research	06/2021	Health Sciences
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA	PhD	06/2026 (expected)	Economics

A. Personal Statement

I am a University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, and MIT trained economist, epidemiologist, and data scientist who studies the social and economic determinants of health and healthcare utilization. My research uses traditional survey data, administrative data, and novel “big data” sources and spans both descriptive and quasi-experimental methods. On the descriptive side, I have led several studies to track some of the most important trends in modern public health practice. For example, I led three studies, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the American Journal of Public Health, and JAMA Pediatrics that used data from the Centers for Disease Control’s Youth Behavioral Risk Surveillance System to track the increased risk of suicide behaviors, substance use, and sexual violence victimization among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Questioning adolescents. I have also led three major studies using Google Search data to study increased interest in heated tobacco products (published in PLOS One) and increased interest in purchasing marijuana products online (published in American Journal of Preventive Medicine). On the quasi-experimental side, I led studies on the impact of the #MeToo movement on sexual harassment prevention and reporting (published in JAMA Internal Medicine) and the impact of cigarette tax increases on internet-based tax evasion (published in Nicotine and Tobacco Research). My current working papers study the impacts of pharmacy closures on patient health and healthcare utilization, nursing home quality initiatives on access to care among patients with Alzheimer’s and Related Dementias (ADRD), and recreational marijuana dispensary openings on fatal motor vehicle crashes. I co-authored a landmark study, published in the American Economic Review, that used Medicare Claims data to analyze the effects of for-profit hospice care expansion on healthcare utilization among patients with ADRD. My studies consistently appear in top medical, public health, and economics journals and attract substantial responses by academics and the public, evidenced through academic citations and Altmetric scores.

1. Caputi TL, Smith D, Ayers JW. Suicide risk behaviors among sexual minority adolescents in the United States, 2015. JAMA. 2017;318(23):2349-2351. doi:10.1001/jama.2017.16908
2. Caputi TL, Smith LR, Strathdee SA, Ayers JW. Substance use among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning adolescents in the United States, 2015. Am J Public Health. 2018;108(8):1031-1034. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2018.304446
3. Caputi TL, Nobles AL, Ayers JW. Internet searches for sexual harassment and assault, reporting, and training since the #MeToo movement. JAMA Intern Med. 2019;179(2):258-259. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2018.5094
4. Gruber J, Howard DH, Leder-Luis J, Caputi TL. Dying or lying? For-profit hospices and end-of-life care. Am Econ Rev. 2025;115(1):263-294. doi:10.1257/aer.20230328

B. Positions, Scientific Appointments, and Honors

Positions and Employment

- 2023–2025: NBER Pre-Doctoral Fellow in Aging and Health, National Bureau of Economic Research
- 2022: Research Assistant for Prof. Jon Gruber and Prof. Jetson Leder-Luis, MIT
- 2020–present: Graduate Student, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
- 2019–2021: Graduate Student, University of York, York, UK
- 2019: Research Assistant for Prof. Amanda Pallais, Harvard University
- 2018–2019: Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow, Harvard University Department of Economics, Cambridge, MA

Other Experience and Professional Memberships

- 2019–present: Member, American Economic Association
- 2018–present: Member, American Society for Addiction Medicine
- 2012–2017: Institutional Review Board Member, Treatment Research Institute

Honors

- 2019–2024: NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, National Science Foundation
- 2019–2024: MIT Graduate Fellowship, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 2019–2021: Marshall Scholarship, Marshall Commission
- 2018: Annual Cameron Lecture, University College Cork
- 2017–2019: George J Mitchell Scholarship, US-Ireland Alliance
- 2017: Clarendon Scholarship, University of Oxford (Declined)
- 2017: Phi Beta Kappa, University of Pennsylvania
- 2016: Beta Gamma Sigma, University of Pennsylvania
- 2015: Leonard Davis Institute Undergraduate Research Prize, University of Pennsylvania

C. Contributions to Science

1. Mental health and substance use risk of sexual minority adolescents

I have led several impactful studies on the mental health and substance use risk of sexual minority (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning) adolescents. Specifically, I investigate the increased risk of suicidal behaviors, suicide risk, and sexual violence victimization among sexual minority youth. I also report the role of gender and sexual orientation intersectionality on substance use risk among sexual minority adolescents.

- a. Caputi TL, Smith LR, Strathdee SA, Ayers JW. Substance use among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning adolescents in the United States, 2015. *Am J Public Health*. 2018;108(8):1031-1034. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2018.304446
- b. Caputi TL, Shover CL, Watson RJ. Physical and sexual violence among gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning adolescents. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2020;174(8):791-793. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.6291
- c. Caputi TL, Smith D, Ayers JW. Suicide risk behaviors among sexual minority adolescents in the United States, 2015. *JAMA*. 2017;318(23):2349-2351. doi:10.1001/jama.2017.16908
- d. Caputi TL. Sex and orientation identity matter in the substance use behaviors of sexual minority adolescents in the United States. *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2018;187:142-148. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2018.01.012

2. Improved rigor of discourse on the effects of marijuana policies

I have fostered a better understanding of the “ecological fallacy” in the policy and academic discourse regarding the effects of US marijuana policies. Specifically, I have described how several studies conflate population-level trends with individual-level substitution when analyzing the effects of state marijuana policies on outcomes such as opioid use, drug treatment seeking, and BMI. I provided evidence that medical marijuana use is a risk factor for non-medical prescription pain use at the individual level.

- a. Caputi TL. Medical marijuana, not miracle marijuana: some well-publicized studies about medical marijuana do not pass a reality check. *Addiction*. 2019;114(6):1128-1129. doi:10.1111/add.14580
- b. Caputi TL, Sabet K. Population-level analyses cannot tell us anything about individual-level marijuana-opioid

substitution. *Am J Public Health*. 2018;108(3):e12. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2017.304253

- c. Caputi TL, Humphreys K. Medical marijuana users are more likely to use prescription drugs medically and nonmedically. *J Addict Med*. 2018;12(4):295-299. doi:10.1097/ADM.0000000000000405
- d. Caputi TL, Humphreys K. Medicare recipients' use of medical marijuana. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2016;35(10):1936. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2016.1108

3. Determinants of healthcare utilization among Medicare beneficiaries

I have contributed to two extensive research projects using Medicare Claims data and quasi-experimental study designs to investigate the determinants of healthcare utilization. The first project studies the impact of for-profit hospice expansion on Medicare recipients' use of other healthcare services. This paper, published in the *American Economic Review*, finds that the increase in for-profit hospice operators increases access to hospice care among patients with Alzheimer's and Related Dementias and reduces use of more expensive forms of care. Consequently, government initiatives intended to limit the growth of for-profit hospice care may be counterproductive. The second project studies the impact of retail pharmacy closures on Medicare patients' health and healthcare access. I find that patients adapt to pharmacy closures by increasing their use of longer prescription lengths and mail-order pharmacies. Therefore, policy concern about retail pharmacy closures may be misplaced.

- a. Gruber J, Howard DH, Leder-Luis J, Caputi TL. Dying or lying? For-profit hospices and end-of-life care. *Am Econ Rev*. 2025;115(1):263-294. doi:10.1257/aer.20230328
- b. Caputi TL. The value of pharmacies. Working Paper. 2024.

4. Application of novel data and quasi-experimental designs to answer pressing public health questions

As a trained economist, I apply the economists' toolkit of quasi-experimental methods to answer pressing causal public health questions when randomized controlled trials are not feasible. For example, in a working paper, I develop a novel dataset of recreational marijuana dispensary openings and use an event study technique to estimate the effect of dispensary openings on fatal motor vehicle crashes. I have used Google Search data and interrupted time series analyses to estimate the effects of the #MeToo movement on sexual harassment prevention and reporting and cigarette tax increases on internet-based evasion.

- a. Caputi TL. Recreational marijuana dispensaries and fatal car crashes. Working Paper. 2024.
- b. Caputi TL, Nobles AL, Ayers JW. Internet searches for sexual harassment and assault, reporting, and training since the #MeToo movement. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2019;179(2):258-259. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2018.5094
- c. Caputi TL. Google searches for "cheap cigarettes" spike at tax increases: evidence from an algorithm to detect spikes in time series data. *Nicotine Tob Res*. 2018;20(6):779-783. doi:10.1093/ntr/ntx143

D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

Ongoing Research Support

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship

Caputi, Theodore L. (PI)
09/2019 – 09/2024

NBER Pre-Doctoral Fellowship in Aging and Health

Caputi, Theodore L. (Fellow)
09/2023 – 09/2025