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MIT PLACEMENT OFFICER

Professor Ben Olken bolken@mit.edu
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**DOCTORAL
STUDIES**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
PhD, Economics, Expected completion June 2012
DISSERTATION: "Essays on the Economics of Health Care Delivery"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor Amy Finkelstein
MIT Department of Economics
50 Memorial Drive, E52-357
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Professor Jonathan Gruber
MIT Department of Economics
50 Memorial Drive, E52-355
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Professor Amitabh Chandra
John F. Kennedy School of
Government
Mailbox 26
79 JFK Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-496-7356
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**PRIOR
EDUCATION**

University of Minnesota, 2007
B.S. in Mathematics and Economics
High Distinction

CITIZENSHIP

United States

GENDER: MALE

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1985

FIELDS

Primary Fields: Public Finance, Health Economics
Secondary Field: Industrial Organization

**TEACHING
EXPERIENCE**

Public Finance & Public Policy (undergraduate, MIT course
14.41), Teaching Assistant to Professor Amy Finkelstein Fall 2011
Public Finance & Public Policy (undergraduate, MIT course
14.41), Teaching Assistant to Professor Jonathan Gruber Fall 2010

RELEVANT POSITIONS	Research Assistant to Professor Amy Finkelstein Research Assistant to Professor Thomas Holmes	2008-2011 2005-2007
FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS	NBER Pre-Doctoral Fellow in Aging and Health Economics John Castle Economics Fellowship, MIT Chick Evans Scholar of the Year Stockman Scholarship in Economics, U of MN Barry M. Goldwater Scholar	2010-2012 2007-2009 2007 2006-2007 2005-2007
PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES	Participant: Price Theory Summer Institute, University of Chicago	2010
RESEARCH PAPERS	“The Evolution of Physician Practice Styles: Evidence from Cardiologist Migration” (Job Market Paper) A large literature in medicine documents widespread variation in regional treatment intensity and resource use, but little is known about why physicians treat patients so differently across these regions. In this paper, I explore the role of physician-specific factors such as preferences and learned behavior versus environment-level factors such as hospital capacity and productivity spillovers on physician behavior. I exploit cardiologist migration across geographic regions and find that physicians who start off in the same region and subsequently move to dissimilar regions practice similarly before the move but very differently after the move. Based on this change in behavior, baseline estimates imply that the role of the environment on physician behavior is twice as important as physician-specific factors. Specifically, a one percentage point change in practice environment results in an immediate 2/3 percentage point change in physician behavior, with no further changes over time.	
RESEARCH IN PROGRESS	“Technology Diffusion and Learning Spillovers in Health Care: Evidence from New Cancer Drugs” (joint with Leila Agha) Adoption of new health care technologies is widely considered to be a key driver of both rising health costs and improved outcomes in the United States. This paper explores the diffusion of new chemotherapy drugs by testing the influence of pioneer physicians who participate in clinical trials. In particular, we test whether proximity to a pioneer investigator, either through geography or shared professional networks, influences the speed or efficiency of technology adoption. We exploit a new data collection effort to identify the early clinical trial sites and principal investigators for new chemotherapy drug trials. Using Medicare claims data and clinical trial information, we study how physician proximity to these trials corresponds to the speed of adoption following FDA approval for the drug, whether it differentially predicts adoption of more effective drugs, and how it relates to the propensity to use or disuse a drug as it is shown to be more or less effective than expected. Finally, we use this information network as a source of variation in early adoption and then test whether the potentially costly early experimentation by pioneers generates learning spillovers to late adopters.	