

International Health Economics Workshop

Venue: University of Mainz, new ReWi building
Jakob-Welder-Weg 9, Mainz
Room: Dekanatssaal (3rd floor)

Keynote, Friday, Sept. 6, 2019, 2.15-3.15 pm

Jim Smith (Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, USA) :
“What Were Long-Term Health and Economic Effects of World War II?”

Jim Smith who holds the Distinguished Chair in Labor Markets and Demographic Studies of the Rand Corporation will present the keynote address, titled “What Were Long-Term Health and Economic Effects of World War II?” at the International Health Economics Workshop in Mainz Germany. He will summarise results of several of his papers that address the question of how the experience of war affects health and health behaviour, labor market outcomes, and preferences.

For his research, he and his co-authors collected data from historical records on how war affected individual lives (combat actions, caloric rations, sex ratios) and merged them to survey data. The main survey data used is the retrospective history of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (commonly known as SHARE) in 2008. The individuals surveyed experienced WWII in their youth in the 1940s. The survey documented testimonies of hunger (induced in part by food rationing), loss of fathers who went to war, civilian exposure to combat, dispossession of property, persecution, migration, and gender imbalance during and after the war.

Smith and his coauthors found that the experience of war led to higher levels of diabetes, obesity, depression, and worse self-reported health as older adults. In the economic context, those who lived through WWII noted having lower levels of adult education, life satisfaction, lower family income, and less trust in others.