

Ralph Ignacio Lawton

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Education

- 2021–2029 **Harvard University**, MD/PhD program
PhD in Health Policy [Economics track]
National Institute on Aging - Medical Scientist Training Program
Presidential Scholars Fellowship
- 2016-2020 **Duke University**, B.S. Economics with High Distinction
Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude, Robertson Scholar

Publications

- [1] Lawton, Ralph, and David Cutler. “Cardiovascular Risk Factor Prevalence and Control by Education in Older Adults in Three Countries.” *JAMA Network Open* (in press).
- [2] Lawton, Ralph. “Early-life infectious disease exposure, the “hygiene hypothesis,” and lifespan: Evidence from hookworm disease.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* *122*, no. 35 (2025): e2504265122. *Winner of the 2025 Dorothy Thomas Award.*
- [3] Lawton, Ralph, Elizabeth Frankenberg, Teresa Seeman, Arun Karlamangla, Cecep Sumantri, and Duncan Thomas. “Explaining Adverse Cholesterol Levels and Distinct Gender Patterns in an Indonesian Population Compared with the U.S.” *Economics & Human Biology*, *10143* (2024). Working Paper version: *NBER WP 32489* (2024)
- [4] Lawton, Ralph, Bernardo Sabatini, and Daniel Hochbaum. “Longevity, demographic characteristics, and socio-economic status are linked to triiodothyronine levels in the general population.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *121* (2024 2): e2308652121
- [5] Lawton, Ralph, Elizabeth Frankenberg, Teresa Seeman, Cecep Sumantri, Eileen Crimmins, and Duncan Thomas. “Exposure to the Indian Ocean Tsunami shapes the HPA-axis resulting in HPA “burnout” 14 years later.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *120* (2023 44): e2306497120
- [6] Thomas, Duncan, Ralph Lawton, Tyson Brown, and Rachel Kranton. “Prevalence, Severity and Distribution of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms Using Observational Data Collected Before and Nine Months into the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *The Lancet Regional Health - Americas*, *1* (2021): 100009.
- [7] Lawton, Ralph, Kevin Zheng, Daniel Zheng, and Erich Huang. “A Longitudinal Study of Convergence Between Black and White COVID-19 Mortality: A County Fixed Effects Approach.” *The Lancet Regional Health - Americas*, *1* (2021): 100011.

- [8] Leigh, Noel, Ralph Lawton, Pamela Hershberger, and Maciej Goniewicz. “Flavourings Significantly Affect Inhalation Toxicity of Aerosol Generated from Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).” *Tobacco Control*, 25 (2016 Suppl 2): ii81-ii87.
- [9] **Honors Thesis (Best Thesis Award - Economics)**: Evolution of Wealth and Consumption in the Aftermath of a Major Natural Disaster (2020).

Works in Progress

Economics of Chronic Disease - with David Cutler and Maria Polyakova - in progress. Presented at the AEA/ASSA Annual Meeting, 2026.

Lifetime Dementia Risk and Labor Market Outcomes - with Yuan Zhang - in progress. Presented (poster) at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting, 2026.

Long Term Economic Wellbeing After the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami - with Elizabeth Frankenberg, Jed Friedman, and Duncan Thomas. *Presented at NEUDC 2021*

Olfactory-based measurements of cognition and memory in low-resource settings – data collection in progress with Duncan Thomas, Elizabeth Frankenberg, Alefiya Albers, and Mark Albers - presented at Population Association of America 2024, Biomarker Network Meeting 2024.

Stress, thyroid function, and metabolism 20 years after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami - with Daniel Hochbaum, Duncan Thomas, and Elizabeth Frankenberg - in progress. Presented (podium) at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting, 2026.

Trends in smoking-related mortality over time - with Ellen Meara, Jennifer Dowd, and Jon Skinner - Under Revision.

Selected Honors and Awards

2025	Dorothy Thomas Award, best graduate student paper. PAA.
2016–2020	Robertson Scholar – Full Merit Scholarship, Duke University
2020	Allen Starling Johnson Jr Best Thesis Prize, Duke Dept of Economics
2020	Faculty Scholar Nominee – Top Student in Economics, Duke University
2018	USA Archery Team – Top 5 Archers in US Under 21
2018,2020	USA Archery All-American – Top Collegiate Archers Nationwide
2016	Eagle Scout

Service and Other Interests

- 2021– Harvard Medical School MD/PhD Program Steering Committee
- 2021–2023 Junior Clinician – Crimson Care Collaborative Mass. General Hospital
- 2021–2022 HMS Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association Executive Board
- 2021– Harvard/MIT Equitable Access to Research Training (Summer Program) Board
- 2018– USA Archery Level 2 Coach

Referee Service

Quarterly Journal of Economics; Journal of Health Economics; Health Economics; Health Economics, Policy and Law

Professional Experience

- 2024– Research Assistant, Ellen Meara, Harvard SPH and NBER
- 2021–2022 Research Assistant, Gautam Rao and Frank Schilbach, Harvard Econ.
- 2021–2021 Research Assistant, Marcella Alsan, Harvard Kennedy School
- 2016–2021 Associate in Research, NBER and Duke University
Researchers: Duncan Thomas, Elizabeth Frankenebrg
- 2018–2018 Research Intern, Edgecombe County Health Department
Supervisor: William Leland

Presentations and Conferences

- [1] Lawton, Ralph I., and David M. Cutler. "Cardiovascular Disease Risk Control by Education across the United States, England, and South Korea." *NBER Meeting on Health and Healthcare Variations across the Population*, Spring 2026.
- [2] Lawton, R., D. Thomas, E. Frankenberg, C. Sumantri, T. Seeman, E. Crimmins, and D. Hochbaum. "Sustained Impacts of Stress on Thyroid Function and Cardiometabolic Health: Twenty Years After the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami." *Population Association of America Annual Meeting* (podium presentation), 2026.
- [3] Lawton, Ralph, and Yuan Zhang. "Lifetime Dementia Risk and Labor Market Outcomes." *Population Association of America Annual Meeting* (poster), 2026.
- [4] Lawton, Ralph. "Early-life infectious disease exposure, the "hygiene hypothesis", and lifespan: evidence from hookworm." *Alpine Population Conference (poster) 2025. Population Association of America Annual Meeting (poster), 2025. ASHEcon (presentation), 2025.*

- [5] Lawton, Ralph, Elizabeth Frankenberg, Alefiya Albers, Cecep Sumantri, Mark Albers, Duncan Thomas. "Long-Term Impacts of Natural Disaster Exposure on Memory Function." *NIA Biomarker Network Meeting, Population Association of America Annual Meeting* Columbus, OH, 2024. *Center to Accelerate Population Research in Alzheimer's* Ann Arbor, MI, 2024.
- [6] Lawton, Ralph, Bernardo Sabatini, and Daniel Hochbaum. "Economic and Demographic Relationships With the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Thyroid Axis." *NIA Biomarker Network Meeting and Population Association of America Annual Meeting* New Orleans, LA, 2023.
- [7] Lawton, Ralph, Elizabeth Frankenberg, Jed Friedman, and Duncan Thomas. "Long-term Economic Wellbeing After the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami." Northeast Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC), Virtual, 2021.
- [8] Lawton, Ralph, Elizabeth Frankenberg, Teresa Seeman, Cecep Sumantri, and Duncan Thomas. "Long Term Effects of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami on Hair Cortisol Concentration." *Population Association of America Annual Meeting*, Austin, TX, 2019.
- [9] Frankenberg, Elizabeth, Ralph Lawton, Teresa Seeman, Cecep Sumantri, and Duncan Thomas. "The Causal Impact of Stress on Inflammation Over the Long-term: Evidence from Exposure to a Natural Disaster." *Population Association of America Annual Meeting*, Austin, TX, 2019.
- [10] Lawton, Ralph, Elizabeth Frankenberg, Teresa Seeman, Cecep Sumantri, and Duncan Thomas. "Gender Gaps in Cholesterol Levels among Indonesians are Very Large: Roles of Behavioral, Socioeconomic and Other Health Indicators." *Population Association of America Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO, 2018.
- [11] Lawton, Ralph, and William Leland. "Barriers to Opioid Treatment in Rural North Carolina: User and Law Enforcement Perspectives." *ECU School of Medicine Kataria Research Day*, Greenville, NC, 2018.
- [12] Lawton, Ralph. "Toxicological Effects of Flavored Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems on Bronchial Epithelial Cells". *Society for Research in Nicotine and Tobacco annual conference*, Chicago, IL, 2016.