

**Speaker:** Saurabh Singhal

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**Title:**

**The Long-Term Effect of Improving Early-Life Learning Preparedness on Cognitive Abilities**

**Abstract:**

We estimate the long-term impact of an unanticipated shift in the beginning of the academic year from January to July in 1979 in Indonesia. Using a regression discontinuity design, we find that this policy led to between 0.1-0.14 standard deviation increase in cognitive abilities 30 years later. We find evidence that the policy increased long-term cognition by improving learning preparedness in early grades, mainly by increasing the absolute age-for-grade upon enrollment. We also find stronger impacts for individuals who had good health during childhood and did not experience early-life nutrition deficits. Our results provide novel evidence on the long-term impact of improving school readiness on cognition in a low-income country.