Discussion on Mankeekar and Jackson

Jorge Luis García
Department of Economics, The University of Chicago
HCEO Measuring and Assessing Skills
March 3, 2017
Outline

1. Summary and Relevance

2. Comments and Questions
Outline

1 Summary and Relevance

2 Comments and Questions
Great ambition:
- Go beyond standard measures of “intelligence”
- Take into account not only multiple skills, but also the context in which they are measured

Relevant to Economics and Social Science
- Measurement is not commonly the focus or priority
- Allows for much better assessment and better design of social policy

Relevant to Science
- Obtain measures of human development
Formalizing

- Follow Heckman and Cunha (2007) and write:

\[
\theta_{a+1} = \Psi_a \left( \theta_a, \theta^p_a, I_a, e_a, \eta_a \right)
\]

- \( e_a \): effort at measurement, usually in \( \eta_a \)
  - Intending to measure \( e \) is already a lot of progress
Current State I

- We can do a lot with what we currently measure

Life-cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program

![Chart showing components of total benefits](chart.png)

- Per-annum Rate of Return: Males and Females 13.7% (s.e. 3%).
- Benefit-cost Ratio: Males and Females 7.3 (s.e. 1.8).

Source: García, Heckman, et al. (2017)

- But of course miss a lot: no value to skills (only inputs)
But we can also do very little

---

**Missing the Whole Point**

“We reviewed data from 67 high-quality interventions—all of which included some degree of pre-literacy and early math skill-building and most of which targeted economically disadvantaged children—and we found that the effects [on IQ tests] faded startlingly fast: falling by half within a year and by half again two years later.”

Source: Washington Post (February 17, 2017)—both figure and text.

---

... and miss the whole point
Outline

1. Summary and Relevance

2. Comments and Questions
Comments and Questions

- How **predictive** are game scores?
- Is it possible to **anchor game scores** to monetary measures?
- How to **separate** the game score from the “gamer advantage”?
  - ...which current tests do not generally do