UNIVERSIDAD DE GRANADA

Departamento de
Teoría e Historia
Económica

Seminario: Javier López Artero (Universidad de Alicante)

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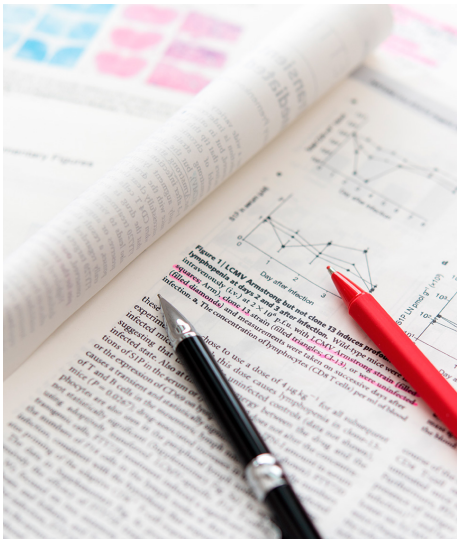
Seminarios 2025-2026



Título: When the Going Gets Tough: The Impact of Health Shocks on Divorce

Sala: E22

Hora: 12:30

Resumen: We analyze the impact of unexpected health shocks—defined as the sudden diagnosis of

cancer, stroke, or heart attack—on the probability of couple dissolution using longitudinal

representative data on older individuals (50+). We leverage the longitudinal nature of

the HRS and utilize a quasi-experimental research approach that creates counterfactual

scenarios for affected households by comparing them to households set to experience the

same event in subsequent years. We find that experiencing a health shock significantly

increases the probability of couple dissolution by approximately 19% of the mean divorce

prevalence. This effect intensifies gradually over time rather than appearing immediately

after the adverse health event. Additionally, we examine several mechanisms

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through which

health shocks may influence divorce, focusing on three potential channels: mental health,

cognitive decline, and financial strain. Our findings suggest that all three mechanisms

likely play a role in mediating the relationship between health shocks and the increased

probability of divorce.

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