

Elisabetta De Cao

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Current position

Professor of Economics, University of Bologna (from October 2025)

Membership of research centers, institutes or colleges

LSE Visiting Fellow (from September 2022)

IZA Research Fellow (from May 2020)

Dondena Research Affiliate, Bocconi University (from January 2010)

Education and qualifications

PhD in Econometrics and Empirical Economics, Tor Vergata University (Rome, Italy), 2011

MSc in Statistics for Economics, Business and Finance, University of Padova (Italy), 2005

BSc in Statistics and Management, University of Padova (Italy), 2003

Italian Qualifying Examination (National) for Associate Professor in Econometrics (13/A5), 2018

British Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Certificate (PGCertHE), 2019

Research and teaching fields

Primary fields: Health economics, Family economics

Secondary fields: Labor economics, Development economics, Applied microeconometrics

Previous positions

Associate Professor in Economics, University of Bologna (June 2024 - September 2025)

Senior Assistant Professor in Economics (RtdB), University of Bologna (May 2022 - June 2024)

Assistant Professor in Health Economics, Department of Health Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science (May 2018 - April 2022)

Research Fellow in Economics, Centre for Health Service Economics & Organisation, Department of Primary Care, University of Oxford (September 2014 - September 2017)

Associate Member (unpaid), Nuffield College, University of Oxford (September 2014 - March 2018)

Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Economics, Econometrics & Finance, University of Groningen, The Netherlands (August 2012 - September 2014)

Research fellow, Department of Pharmacy, University of Groningen, The Netherlands (October 2011 - August 2012)

Junior Research Fellow, Carlo F. Dondena Centre for Research on Social Dynamics, Bocconi University, Italy (June 2010-August 2011)

Visiting periods

Visiting scholar at Leverhulme Centre for Demographic Science, University of Oxford, UK (Summer 2024)

Visiting scholar at Department of Economics, University of Bologna, Italy (Spring 2021)

Visiting scholar at IFPRI-Addis Ababa and field work in Ethiopia (November 2012, November 2013 and May 2014)

Visiting PhD student at Dondena Center, Bocconi University, Italy (Fall 2009)

Visiting PhD student at Penn Institute for Economic Research, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, United States (Academic Year 2008/09 and Spring 2010)

Working papers

“Unveiling Shadows: The Impact of Unemployment on Child Maltreatment” with Daniel Brown. February

2024. IZA Discussion Paper No. 16799.

“Fertility, Genes, and the Sexual Revolution” with Nicola Barban and Marco Francesconi. April 2025.

“A Research Note on Education, Teenage Births and The Role of Genetic Propensities” with Nicola Barban, Selin Koksall and Marco Francesconi. May 2025.

Work in progress

“The Diffusion of Authoritarian Parenting in Africa” with Alberto Ciancio, Giulia La Mattina and Luca Pesando

“High Temperature and Harsh parenting” with Philipp Anthony Naß and Filippo Pavanello

“The intergenerational impact of gestational exposure to the National Health Service in the UK” with Genevieve Jeffrey and Alistair McGuire

“Tracing the genetic footprints of the UK National Health Service” with Massimo Anelli, Nicolau Martin-Bassols, Pietro Biroli, Silvia Mendolia

“The Interplay Between Genetic Endowment and Automation: Evaluating Worker Vulnerability to Employment Shocks from Robotics” with Massimo Anelli, Pietro Biroli, Silvia Mendolia, Yannick Reichlin

“Genetically Informed Estimation of Marginal Returns to Education” with Pietro Biroli, Tomeu Lopez-Nieto Veitch, and Rodrigo Pinto.

“The intergenerational impact of gestational exposure to the National Health Service in the UK” with Genevieve Jeffrey and Alistair McGuire.

“The impact of the Family Planning Association on fertility and mortality” with Nicola Barban and Marco Francesconi.

“The impact of direct and indirect exposure to child maltreatment and social care on educational and labour market outcomes” with Dan Anderberg, Arnaud Chevalier, and Greta Morando.

Publications

“Status (In)Consistency in Education and Violent Parenting Practices Towards Children”, with Luca Pesando, Giulia La Mattina and Alberto Ciancio. **Social Science & Medicine**, 2024, 116954.

“Do recessions worsen babies’ health? A tale of siblings, maternal behaviour and selection.” with Barry McCormick and Catia Nicodemo. **Journal of Health Economics**. 2022, Vol. 83, 102601.

“The effect of education on spousal education: A genetic approach” with Nicola Barban, Sonia Orefice, and Climent Quintana-Domeque. **Labour Economics**. 2021, Vol. 71, 102023.

“Measuring gender attitudes using list experiments” with Niaz Asadullah, Fathema Zahura Khatun, and Zahra Siddique . **Journal of Population Economics**. 2021, Vol. 34, Pages 367-400.

“Does maternal education reduce female genital cutting?” with Giulia La Mattina. **American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings**. 2019, Vol. 109, Pages 100-104.

“Sensitive survey questions: Measuring attitudes regarding female genital mutilation through a list experiment” with Clemens Lutz. **Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics**. 2018, Vol. 80, No. 5, Pages: 871-92.

“Community conversations as a strategy to change harmful traditional practices against women” with Marloes Huis, Samson Jemaneh and Robert Lensink. **Applied Economics Letters**. 2017, Vol. 24, No. 2, Pages 72-74.

“The height production function from birth to age two”. **Journal of Human Capital**. 2015, Vol. 9, No. 3, Pages 329-363.

“Using panel data for partial identification of human immunodeficiency virus prevalence when infection status is missing not at random” with Bruno Arpino and Franco Peracchi. **Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)**. 2014, Vol. 177, Part 3, Pages 578-606.

“The relative importance of frequency of contacts and time of exposure for the spread of directly transmitted infections” with Emilio Zagheni, Alessia Melegaro and Piero Manfredi. **Biostatistics**. 2014, Vol. 15, No. 3, Pages 470-483.

“Optimizing assessments of the epidemiological impact of pediatric immunization with PCV13 using dynamic transmission modeling” with Alessia Melegaro, Rogier Klok and Maarten Postma. **PLoS ONE**. 2014, Vol. 9, No. 4:e89415.

“Cost-effectiveness of pertussis booster vaccination in the Netherlands” with Mark H. Rozenbaum and Maarten J. Postma. **Vaccine**. 2012, Vol. 30, No. 50, Pages 7327-31.

“Dynamic models for health economic assessments of pertussis vaccines: what goes around comes around” with Mark H. Rozenbaum, Tjalke A. Westra and Maarten J. Postma. **Expert Review of Vaccines**. 2012, Vol. 11, No. 12, Pages 1415-1428.

Policy reports

Parts Stichting Gezamenlijke Evaluaties, “MFS-II Evaluations - Joint Evaluations of the Dutch Co-Financing System 2011-2015 - Country Report Ethiopia” Partos. July 2015.

Refereeing

* *Economic & social science journals*. American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Economic Journal, Review of Economics and Statistics, Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Health Economics, Journal of Econometrics, Journal of Population Economics, Journal of the American Statistical Association, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, Journal of Human Capital, Journal of Demographic Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, Labour Economics, Review of Economics of the Household, European Economic Review, Health Economics, Education Economics, Applied Economics, Journal of Development Studies, World Development, European Journal of Development Research, Economics & Human Biology, Economics Bulletin, International Journal of Health Economics and Management, LABOUR: Review of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations, Review of Development Economics, Population Studies, European Societies, Social Science & Medicine, Child Welfare, Child Development Perspectives, Child Abuse & Neglect, Journal of Family Violence, European Political Science Review, Public Opinion Quarterly.

* *Medical journals*. American Journal of Preventative Medicine, BMJ Global, Health Affairs, PLoS ONE, Health Policy and Planning, Lancet Regional Health, Health Care for Women International, Women’s health.

* *Institutions*. Inter American Development Bank.

* *Grants/Fellowships*. National Science Foundation (NSF), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Awards and Scholarships

PI ERC Consolidator, September 2025 - August 2030 (€1,992,657).
PI PRIN 2022 PNRR Research Grant, December 2023 - November 2025 (€284,876).
PI STICERD Research Grant, June 2021 - July 2022 (£4,965).
Co-I BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant, January 2019 - April 2022 (£9,978.40).
Co-I LSE Research Excellence Framework budget: research environment, October 2019 (£6,625).
PI Returning Carers' Fund, University of Oxford, January 2017 (£2,930).
John Snow Society Membership. Best student team (2010 LSHTM Summer School). From 2010.
13th IZA European Summer School Grant, May 2010.
Italian Government Scholarship for Doctoral Studies, September 2006 - August 2009.
Erasmus scholarship: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, September 2002 - February 2003

Media Coverage on Research

ITV, Oxford University News, International Business Times

Teaching activity

Health Econometrics, University of Bologna, From Fall 2022. Graduate Level course, MSc. Course leader.
Fundamentals of Econometrics, University of Bologna, From Fall 2022. Graduate Level course, MSc. Course leader.
Research Design for Evaluating Health Programs and Policies, LSE, Summer 2019 - Summer 2023. Graduate Level course, Executive MSc. Course leader. Currently external teacher for LSE.
Quasi-Experimental Evaluation of Healthcare Programs and Policies, LSE, Fall 2021 and Summer 2022. Graduate Level course, Executive MSc. Course leader.
Applied Health Econometrics, LSE, Fall 2018-Fall 2021. Graduate Level course, MSc. Course leader.
Applied Microeconometrics, University of Groningen, Spring 2013 and Spring 2014. Graduate Level course, MSc. Instructor with Prof. Rob Alessie.
Applied Macroeconometrics, University of Groningen, Spring 2013, Graduate Level course, MSc. Course leader.
Statistics, Bocconi University, Fall 2010, Undergraduate Level course, BSc. TA for Dr. Anna Simoni.
Statistics for Econometrics, Bocconi University, Fall 2010, Graduate Level course, PhD. TA for Dr. Anna Simoni.
Nonparametric Methods and IV and GMM, Tor Vergata University, Spring 2008, Graduate Level course, MSc. TA for Prof. Franco Peracchi.

Student supervision

5 Eu-HEM and 10 HEMAP MSc dissertations, University of Bologna, From Fall 2022.
1 PhD student, Genevieve Jeffrey, LSE Health Policy, VIVA November 2023.
15 MSc and Executive MSc dissertations, LSE, September 2018-May 2022.

Thesis examiner

1 PhD VIVA Dr. Christina Olympiou, Department of Economics, Royal Holloway University of London, November 2021.
2 MPhil, Department of Economics, University of Oxford, January 2015-August 2017.

Mentoring role

Royal Economic Society mentor for early career female researchers (from January 2023).
Mentor for 15 MSc and Executive MSc students, LSE, September 2018-May 2022.

Administrative role

Selection Committee Member for MSc HEMAP students, University of Bologna (from Spring 2024).
Selection Committee Member for PhD students, University of Bologna, Spring 2024.
Track Committee Member, MSc Eu-HEM, University of Bologna (from September 2022).

Master Thesis Coordinator, MSc HEMAP, University of Bologna (from September 2022).

Programme Director for MSc Health Data Science (joint with Dr Sara Geneletti), LSE (September 2021-July 2022).

Coordination of data collection, econometric analysis and draft of reports for the Dutch MFS-II Evaluation of 13 policy interventions in Ethiopia (August 2012 - September 2014).

Coordination of academic activities

Organizer of the Workshop on the Economics of Family and Gender (joint with Nicola Barban and Marco Francesconi), University of Bologna, Bologna, Spring 2022.

Organizer of the Workshop on Family Economics, Gender and Old Age Care (joint with Joan Costa-Font and Berkay Özcan), LSE, London, Fall 2019.

Invited Seminar Presentations

University of Technology Sydney; Universitat de Barcelona; Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (2025); Italian Conference of Health Economics - Special session (2023); UCL Global Health (2022); LSE United Nations Society, Padua, Bologna (web-seminars, 2021); Lund, Alicante, Royal Holloway, Bologna (web-seminars, 2020); Turin, City University of London, LSE (2019); Cà Foscari University (2018); IFO Institute, Leicester School of Business, Institute of Education (UCL), Bocconi University (2017); Institute of Education (UCL), University of Oxford (2015); Wageningen (2014); Wageningen, Rotterdam (2012); Lund, Groningen, Utrecht, Wageningen (2011); Padua (2009).

Selected International Conference Presentations

Italian Association of Labor Economics (2024); NBER Fertility and Declining Population Growth in High-Income Countries, Workshop on Econometric Theory and Applications, European Social Science Genetics Network Conference II (2023); 4th LSE Historical Economic Demography Workshop (2022); RES, SOLE, SEHO, Conference on Genes, Social Mobility, and Inequalities across the Life-Course, IEB Workshop on Public Policies: Gender and Health, Essen Health Conference, EALE (2021); RES, WOLFE, GSE, SEHO (2019); RES, ESPE (2018); ESPE, 1st IZA Workshop on Gender and Family Economics (2017); Workshop Socioeconomic Differences and Health Later in Life - Groningen (2016); RES, iHea, RES Women's Mentoring meeting 2015, CSAE: Economic Development in Africa (2015); ESPE (2014); CSAE: Economic Development in Africa (2013); PAA, Alpine Population Conference (2012); PAA, Alpine Population Conference, EPIDEMICS, Understanding Society/BHPS Conference, Italian Congress of Econometrics and Empirical Economics (2011); PAA, EALE/SOLE, 13th IZA European Summer School in Labor Economics (2010).

Other work experiences

Research consultant for a European Horizon 2020 project DynaHEALTH - Prof. Gabriella Conti, UCL (April 2017 - April 2018)

Health economic consultant, Oxford Policy Management (October 2016-March 2017)