

Highly Powered Analysis Plans *

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Abstract

Formal analysis plans limit false discoveries by registering and multiplicity adjusting statistical tests. As each registered test reduces power on other tests, researchers prune hypotheses based on prior knowledge, often by combining related indicators into evenly-weighted indices. We propose two improvements to maximize learning within analysis plans. We develop data-driven optimized indices that can yield more powerful tests than evenly-weighted indices. and discuss organizing the logical structure of an analysis plan into a gated tree that directs type I error towards these high-powered tests. In simulations we show that researchers may prefer these “optimus gates” across a wide range of data-generating processes. We then assess our strategy using the community-driven development (CDD) application from Casey et al. (2012), a novel RCT on cash transfers and integrated development in the DRC, and the Oregon Health Insurance Experiment from Finkelstein et al. (2012). We find substantial power gains in all applications, meaningfully changing the conclusions of Casey et al. (2012).

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1 Introduction

A classic tradeoff in data analysis exists between estimating large numbers of parameters and generating results that do not reproduce in new samples. In computer science and machine learning this problem is known as “overfitting”; in biostatistics it manifests itself in “large-scale multiple testing.” In the past decade it has become a critical issue in empirical microeconomics with the widespread use of field experiments.¹ Researchers designing field experiments often face high fixed costs in setting up the experiment and low marginal costs in adding additional survey outcomes. Increasing sample size is expensive, and the samples in many field experiments are too small to detect anything less than a large effect. Given these constraints and the focus on positive results in economics and other social sciences (Gerber and Malhotra 2008; Yong 2012), researchers face strong incentives to test for effects on many outcomes or subgroups and then emphasize the subset of significant results. Unfortunately this behavior maximizes the chances of “false discoveries” (type I errors) that do not replicate in new samples.

Economists have a range of formal and informal tools available to limit false discoveries. Statistical methods that control the familywise error rate (FWER) or false discovery rate (FDR) formally test whether p -values are more extreme than would be expected under the null hypothesis based on the number of reported results (List et al., 2019). Credibly implementing these procedures, however, requires documenting the full set of conducted tests, usually through a preanalysis plan (PAP).² With a PAP, the researcher publicly documents the set of hypotheses that she intends to test prior to collecting the data, allowing formal control of type I error. Informal methods that limit false discoveries are also available; for example, registering a set of hypotheses through the AEA registry, or basing an analysis on a well-described (and perhaps registered) theory. Documenting the intent to pursue a particular direction of research demonstrates that the overall line of inquiry was not influenced by sample characteristics but allows researchers to respond to new ideas and information in the analysis, albeit at the cost of being unable to credibly control FWER at a specific value.

The tension between formal and informal control of false discoveries is driven by a tradeoff between statistical power and false discoveries. The fact that all hypotheses in a PAP must be

¹It is also an issue in many observational studies, but it is difficult to establish when a researcher first had access to the data in an observational study. Establishing this timeline is critical to any method for limiting false discoveries.

²This method follows an approach used for decades in biostatistics (Simes 1986; Horton and Smith 1999) and appeared in economics at least as early as Neumark (2001). Casey et al. (2012) established best practices and popularized the use of PAPs among empirical microeconomics using a case of a Community-Driven Development (CDD) program in Sierra Leone. Both field experiments and PAPs have increased sharply in prevalence since 2010 (Currie et al. 2020).

anticipated constrains researchers and generates concerns about type II errors — failures to reject false hypotheses. Since each hypothesis included in a PAP that controls FWER increases test critical values for *other* hypotheses, power depends on the researcher correctly anticipating the set of hypotheses which are likely false and excluding those which are not. Individual researchers care about power, and the field as a whole suffers if novel discoveries are precluded or tests lack power to detect economically meaningful effects (Czibor et al., 2019). Consolidating or otherwise reducing the number hypotheses can thus be attractive. Casey et al. (2012), for example, suggest combining outcome indicators into a range of unweighted summary indices to minimize the number of tests conducted. Olken (2015) recommends prespecifying a very small number of primary hypotheses, and foregoing formal FWER control over remaining hypotheses of interest. Banerjee et al. (2020) propose parallel streams for a “populated PAP”, which reports the primary effects of an intervention, and a separate analysis in an academic paper, which foregoes control of false discoveries across the non-prespecified hypotheses. Such an approach balances the desire to demonstrate meaningful positive results on some indicators against the cost that novel findings may represent false discoveries.

This paper builds on Banerjee et al. (2020)’s insights to develop a key advantage of analysis plans: by formally controlling type I error we can generate statistical tests of correct size for *any* hypothesis. In doing so, we integrate and nest insights from classical econometrics, biostatistics, and machine learning (ML). We propose two tools to increase power on hypotheses of interest. First, we suggest an algorithm which maximizes power over the set of potential summary index hypotheses, allowing researchers to summarize many outcome variables in a single high-powered “optimus” test. As an index test, the optimus index retains the interpretation of an average treatment effect across multiple outcome indicators. Our approach strives to divorce anticipation of the most relevant indicators of interest from multiple inference control and instead uses the data to inform researchers as to which candidate index hypotheses are likely to represent high-powered tests. This approach leverages the analysis plan to avoid what would otherwise be a data-mining exercise resulting in tests with incorrect size. Second, we consider gatekeeping approaches to integrate the logical structure of an economic argument into the allocation of type I error. Gatekeeping approaches test hypotheses in serial rather than in parallel; in doing so they generate higher-powered tests on the first hypotheses examined at the potential cost of lower power on hypotheses tested subsequently. We demonstrate that combining gatekeeping with the optimized index generates a powerful test structure which yields substantial gains over existing methods of controlling false discoveries. We expect this structure may be applicable in many economic contexts.

We consider three empirical applications. First, we reconsider the community-driven develop-

ment (CDD) intervention studied by Casey et al. (2012). This application has several advantages: it is the seminal application which popularized PAPs among microeconomists, and its PAP organizes indicators into families and suggests a clear logical structure for hypothesis tests. We adapt the pure PAP suggested by Casey et al. (2012) into a gatekeeping structure with optimized index tests. We find that the additional power generated by these tools would have led to important differences in the qualitative and quantitative understanding of the effects of the CDD program. Second, we consider a novel randomized controlled trial that evaluates the impacts of an integrated development program with and without large-scale cash transfers in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Here we find that a PAP based on Optimus gates would replicate several findings in the literature on large-scale cash transfers and that it would identify a novel psychosocial effect of receiving cash that other analysis plans would miss. We discuss the differences in conclusions on the effects of the two programs allowed by the (higher power) gated optimus approach. Finally, we consider the Oregon Health Insurance Experiment (OHIE), analyzed in Finkelstein et al. (2012). The analysis of OHIE was also prespecified. In contrast to Casey et al. (2012), however, the sample was large, effect sizes were more homogeneous, and the PAP-guided analysis yielded strong evidence in support of the effects of health insurance on healthcare utilization and some health outcomes. We thus treat the positive results presented in Finkelstein et al. (2012) as the true data generating process (DGP) and demonstrate that, in samples an order of magnitude smaller than the original sample, a gated optimus approach would have substantially higher statistical power to reject the null hypothesis than other available estimators.

The tools developed in this paper allow precise control of type I error and speak directly to two costs of formal analysis plans identified in Banerjee et al. (2020). First, statistical power may be greatly boosted by researchers using the optimus index over any other potential index that they could identify. Since the algorithm is prespecified, readers and reviewers need not worry about cherry-picking or the potential for false discoveries. Second, analysis plans based on these methods can be simple. To implement an optimus index test, one needs only know which indicators are grouped into which families of hypotheses. We suggest a simple gatekeeping structure which will be intuitive in many contexts: a first-stage gate that measures whether variables related to program implementation respond to treatment, a second-stage gate that tests one or more optimus indices in parallel, and a final stage that tests individual outcome indicators. Since the use of the optimus index generates high-power tests at each of the gates, researchers can concentrate error on each set of tests knowing that they have identified the highest power potential test to run. While the use of these tools does not replace the need for analysis and research beyond the registered analyses, the tools may greatly expand what can be learned through the rigorously-controlled PAP

whenever power is not abundant.

While the optimus approach yields tests of the correct size, interpretation of effect sizes is a separate issue. We propose using a K -fold hold-out sample to form the optimus index, and demonstrate that the K -fold optimus regression coefficient is an unbiased estimator of a weighted average of treatment effects. The optimus weights towards outcomes with larger (true) treatment effects, however, so it does not represent the estimated effect size for the average outcome indicator, which could be reported separately. Nevertheless, as we demonstrate in our applications, the optimus coefficient is often smaller in magnitude than the average coefficient on outcome indicators with positive results in a conventional PAP, because its higher power reduces the bias inherent in focusing on significant results (Andrews and Kasy, 2019).

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we set up a research environment in which researchers have access to a large number of outcome indicators (i.e. hypotheses) and are interested in testing for treatment effects on these outcomes. We then suggest that many of these indicators may be measurements of underlying latent variables, and discuss potential index tests deriving from these latent variable hypotheses. Next, we introduce the optimus index, and discuss gatekeeping approaches to error allocation. Section 3 describes numerical simulations, and Sections 4, 5, and 6 discuss and present results for our applications. Section 7 concludes with recommendations.

2 Background

To structure the discussion, consider the case of a researcher who conducts a field experiment which assigns treatment, T , to a random fraction of the sample. For each participant i , she collects data on a set of H outcomes, $\{Y_{i1}, Y_{i2}, \dots, Y_{iH}\}$. These outcomes may be a mixture of individual variables and indices that aggregate multiple variables. They map to H hypotheses, where the underlying relationship is

$$Y_{ih} = \beta_h T_i + \varepsilon_{ih} \tag{1}$$

The researcher wishes to test the null hypothesis $\mathbf{H}_h^0 : \beta_h = 0$ against the two-sided alternative $\mathbf{H}_h^A : \beta_h \neq 0$. Using the sample data, we can estimate the average treatment effect, $\hat{\beta}_h$, and an accompanying standard error, $\text{s.e.}(\hat{\beta}_h)$, that is an estimate of σ_h (the standard deviation of $\hat{\beta}_h$). These are used to form a t -statistic under the null hypothesis, $\hat{t}_h = \frac{\hat{\beta}_h - 0}{\text{s.e.}(\hat{\beta}_h)}$. Using the t -distribution with $N - 1$ degrees of freedom, the researcher can find a critical value of $t_{\alpha/2}$.³ If the estimated

³Let $t \sim t_{N-1}(0, 1)$ be distributed according to the centered t -distribution with $N - 1$ degrees of freedom and standard deviation of 1. The probability of t falling anywhere above the critical value $t_{\alpha/2}$ or below $-t_{\alpha/2}$ is α .

\hat{t}_h falls above $t_{\alpha/2}$ or below $-t_{\alpha/2}$, we reject the null hypothesis H_h^0 at the α significance level. As scientific convention, we take $\alpha = 0.05$.

The set $\mathcal{H} = \{1, \dots, H\}$ enumerates all candidate outcome variables Y_h , where $h \in \mathcal{H}$ is associated with a hypothesis as described above. In most field experiments the implementation of the treatment is expensive, but measuring an additional outcome has low marginal cost. Often H is therefore large.

We denote the benchmark objective function as the *Simple Rejection Problem*. In the Simple Rejection Problem, the researcher maximizes the expected sum of statistically significant treatment effects. This objective function accords with one of the definitions of power that Romano et al. (2010) propose (p. 95), and we use it throughout the paper. The researcher forms expectations about rejections according to a prior belief F_h over $\{\beta_h, \sigma_h\}$ and selects a subset of hypotheses to test, $\mathcal{H}' \subseteq \mathcal{H}$, that solves

$$\max_{\mathcal{H}' \subseteq 2^{\mathcal{H}}} \mathbb{E} \left[\sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}'} \mathbb{I}\{|\hat{t}_h| > t_{\alpha/2}\} \right] = \max_{\mathcal{H}' \subseteq 2^{\mathcal{H}}} \sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}'} \mathbb{P}_{F_h} (|\hat{t}_h| > t_{\alpha/2}) \quad (2)$$

There is no constraint in the maximization problem above, so the maximizing subset, \mathcal{H}^* , is the subset of hypotheses with a positive probability of rejection. Since even true hypotheses reject at rate α , the maximizing subset is $\mathcal{H}^* = \mathcal{H}$, and the researcher tests for effects on every possible outcome. This solution naturally opens the door to false discoveries, and limiting these false discoveries is a critical issue in most empirical disciplines (Sterling 1959).

2.1 False Discovery Problem

The fundamental problem with testing every hypothesis in \mathcal{H} is that in any hypothesis test there is a chance that the sample statistic falls in the rejection region, even if the null hypothesis is true. This false discovery problem leads to costly but ultimately futile future research, as well as potentially dangerous policy. More broadly, it erodes the trust that the public has in the results that researchers find. Thus it is important to minimize the rejection of true hypotheses, or the type I error rate.⁴

Returning to the researcher's decision in Equation (2), in the worst-case scenario all the null hypotheses in \mathcal{H} are true. Even though the study contains no false hypotheses, it still rejects $\alpha \cdot |\mathcal{H}|$ of the hypotheses in expectation. As an example, suppose 100 hypotheses are tested at

⁴This paper is not the first to discuss the false discovery problem in the context of randomized experiments in economics or the general social sciences. For example, see Anderson (2008), Anderson and Magruder (2017), and Fafchamps and Labonne (2017) for related discussions of these issues and techniques for controlling the type I error rate.

a significance level of 0.05. Even if all 100 null hypotheses are true, we expect the study to (incorrectly) reject five of the null hypotheses, generating five significant findings.

To address this issue, multiplicity adjustments work to control the overall type I error rate of the study. This error rate is either the probability that the study makes at least one incorrect rejection — the familywise error rate — or the expected proportion of rejections that are incorrect — the false discovery rate. The simplest adjustment is the Bonferroni correction, which controls FWER. With the Bonferroni correction, we divide α by the number of hypotheses tested, in this case, $|\mathcal{H}'|$.⁵ The researcher’s problem becomes⁶

$$\max_{\mathcal{H}' \in 2^{\mathcal{H}}} \mathbb{E} \left[\sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}'} \mathbb{I}\{|\hat{t}_h| > t_{\alpha/2|\mathcal{H}'|}\} \right] = \max_{\mathcal{H}' \in 2^{\mathcal{H}}} \sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}'} \mathbb{P}_{F_h} (|\hat{t}_h| > t_{\alpha/2|\mathcal{H}'|}) \quad (3)$$

where $t_{\alpha/2|\mathcal{H}'|}$ is the critical value above which a standard t -statistic has probability $\frac{\alpha}{2|\mathcal{H}'|}$ of falling.

The critical value $t_{\alpha/2|\mathcal{H}'|}$ increases with $|\mathcal{H}'|$; for example, $t_{\alpha/2|\mathcal{H}'|} = 3.49$ if $|\mathcal{H}'| = 100$. In this example, a hypothesis that would reject with 80% probability prior to multiplicity adjustment — a common benchmark in study design — would reject with only 24% probability after multiplicity adjustment. The more hypotheses the researcher tests, the higher the critical value becomes, and the lower the probability of rejecting a given hypothesis becomes.

A straightforward response to this tension is to reduce the dimensionality of \mathcal{H}' , and a frequently utilized tool to do so is to aggregate related indicators into a small number of index hypotheses (Kling et al., 2007). Ideally, this preserves the economic result identified by the test while paying a double dividend for power: it reduces the number of hypotheses tested *and* generates indices with smaller standard deviations than their underlying components.

At the same time, whether the researcher aggregates indicators or not, the validity of the multiplicity adjustment requires honest disclosure of \mathcal{H}' , which creates an incentive problem for researchers. A researcher motivated to increase rejections could test every hypothesis in \mathcal{H} but report a subset, \mathcal{H}_r , that contains only hypotheses with large t -statistics. In many cases $|\mathcal{H}_r| \ll |\mathcal{H}|$, and the multiplicity adjustment for each test becomes much less severe.⁷ Thus, multiplicity adjustments are only effective when researchers can credibly communicate the number of hypotheses they have tested.

⁵More sophisticated adjustments exist that minimize the power reduction associated with additional tests. Nevertheless, it is inherent in the control of FWER, or the probability of making any type I error (i.e. false rejection), that adding more tests requires more stringent adjustment of p -values. Otherwise, the probability of making at least one error rises. The only case in which FWER would not rise would be the case in which the new test is perfectly correlated with one or more of the existing tests. In this case the new test does not represent new information.

⁶Here $\mathbb{I}\{\cdot\}$ is the indicator function, equal to 1 if the condition $\{\cdot\}$ is true, and equal to 0 otherwise.

⁷When there exist many candidate index hypotheses, the problem is arguably greater: researchers motivated to find rejections can curate the selection of indicators into an index with the best in-sample performance.

2.2 Preanalysis Plans

One way to credibly communicate the number of hypotheses to be tested is to file a preanalysis plan. A PAP describes in detail the analyses that a researcher intends to perform, including the construction of any index hypotheses. An effective PAP requires that the researcher upload it to a public site, such as the AEA RCT Registry, prior to collecting her data. With a publicly registered PAP, the researcher “ties her hands” with respect to the analysis, thus preventing “cherry picking” of results or “ p -hacking.” Formally, readers can be confident that the reported set of tested hypotheses, \mathcal{H}_r , represents the true set of tested hypotheses, \mathcal{H}' . In what follows, we define the *exhaustive PAP* to indicate the PAP which prespecifies every hypothesis in \mathcal{H} , that is the PAP where $\mathcal{H}_r = \mathcal{H}' = \mathcal{H}$.

In addition to specifying the hypotheses to be tested, an effective PAP must specify some form of multiplicity adjustment for statistical tests (assuming it tests more than one hypothesis). Without any multiplicity adjustment, the researcher’s optimal strategy is to include as many hypotheses as possible, even those that may be very unlikely to reject or of little interest, since the option value of including any given hypothesis test in the PAP is weakly positive. The constraints on the PAP thus become the researcher’s creativity and value of time.

Multiplicity adjustments formalize the implicit tradeoff that motivates PAPs to begin with. Each additional test has option value in that it may reject and be of interest, but it also carries an explicit cost in that it reduces the power of other included tests. These adjustments thus impose discipline on the researcher’s hypothesis selection process.

2.3 Aggregate Hypotheses in PAPs

In many contexts, a number of indicator variables may correspond to the same latent economic or conceptual hypothesis. In such cases, we may be able to partition the hypothesis set \mathcal{H} into G groups, such that \mathcal{H}_g contains the hypotheses belonging to group g . We may then test one aggregate hypothesis per group, for G total tests, rather than executing a full H tests. In general, $H \ll G$.

There are two well-established approaches within the literature for aggregating hypotheses in this context. The first, which has been infrequently utilized in PAPs to date, is a Wald test. A Wald test imposes no further restrictions on the data-generating process and tests the joint null hypothesis $\beta_{hg} = 0 \forall h \in g$, following a seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) of all outcomes in group g on treatment. Ludwig et al. (2019) demonstrate that an asymptotically equivalent test is to estimate a “reverse regression” of treatment on all outcomes in group g ,

$$T_i = \sum_{h \in g} \theta_{hg} y_{ihg} + v_{ig} \quad (4)$$

and use an F -test to test the hypothesis that $\theta_{hg} = 0 \forall h \in g$.

A second approach — more widely utilized in the modern empirical literature — supposes that treatment effects are weakly monotonic within a group.⁸ Then we can represent the data generating process as

$$\begin{aligned} y_{ig}^* &= \delta_g T_i + \varepsilon_{ig}^* \\ y_{ihg} &= \gamma_{hg} y_{ig}^* + u_{ihg} \forall h \in \mathcal{H}_g \\ \gamma_{hg} &\in [0, c) \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Now $\beta_{hg} = \delta_g \gamma_{hg}$. In these cases, the researcher may be primarily interested in rejecting the hypothesis $H_g : \delta_g = 0$; then, rejecting any convex combination of the indicators in \mathcal{H}_g suffices to reject H_g . This insight motivates reducing the problem of dimensionality in the hypothesis space through the construction of an aggregate index hypothesis, which are often unweighted averages of outcomes (Kling et al., 2007). That is, researchers test $\beta_{\bar{y}} = 0$ by estimating the regression

$$\frac{1}{|\mathcal{H}_g|} \sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}_g} y_{ihg} = \beta_{\bar{y}} T_i + \nu_{ig} \quad (6)$$

for hypotheses in group g . More generally, they may test a weighted version of the index

$$\mathbf{w}'_g \mathbf{y}_{ig} = \beta_{\mathbf{w}_g} T_i + \nu_{i\mathbf{w}_g} \quad (7)$$

where \mathbf{y}_{ig} is a $|\mathcal{H}_g| \times 1$ column vector of outcomes in group g , \mathbf{w}_g is a $|\mathcal{H}_g| \times 1$ column vector of weights summing to one (and otherwise unrestricted), and $\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g}$ and $\nu_{i\mathbf{w}_g}$ are scalars. They may use generalized least squares (GLS) weights to increase power (O'Brien, 1984; Anderson, 2008); then, $\mathbf{w}'_g = (\mathbf{1}' \Sigma_g^{-1} \mathbf{1})^{-1} (\mathbf{1}' \Sigma_g^{-1})$, where $\mathbf{1}$ is a column vector of ones and Σ_g is the covariance matrix for \mathbf{y}_{ig} . The GLS index shifts weight towards outcomes that are uncorrelated with other outcomes.

In practice, many authors follow Kling et al. (2007) in using unweighted mean indices across all outcomes in a group g . In what follows, we define the index containing an unweighted average of all standardized outcomes in group g as the *KLK index* for that group. This is a natural choice: if hypotheses are homogeneous with respect to β_{hg} and Σ_g (i.e. all outcomes have the same standardized treatment effects and are equally correlated with each other), the KLK index maximizes statistical power (see Corollary 1.2 in Appendix A2.1). On the other hand, if there is dispersion in the distribution of β_{hg} or the elements of Σ_g , then an index based off the hypotheses with larger

⁸This weak monotonicity assumption, expressed in Equation (5) as $\gamma_{hg} \in [0, c)$, assists with interpretation of the estimated treatment effect, but the test we propose maintains the correct size even if weak monotonicity fails. Nevertheless, higher power estimators that do not impose weak monotonicity may be possible if the indicators are not weakly monotonic.

treatment effects or lower covariances can be more powerful than the KLK index. Of course, designing such an index would require researchers to correctly anticipate the vector β_{hg} and matrix Σ_g , which is often unrealistic.

Both a Wald test and the latent index test allow the researcher to correct p -values only for the number of groups G , not the number of indicator hypotheses H . However, the two have a range of different properties. First, neither is universally more powerful. Panel (a) of Figure 1 presents 80% power isoquants for the two estimators for a range of pairs of treatment effects, β_1 and β_2 , when there are two independent standardized outcomes; isoquants closer to the origin represent more powerful tests. The figure reveals that the Wald test is (much) more powerful in cases where the two treatment effects are opposite in sign, and somewhat more powerful when one treatment effect is zero and the other is not. However, the KLK index has a power advantage when the two treatment effects are similar in magnitude and sign. Thus, KLK indices have a power advantage over Wald tests if researchers have organized their hypothesis groups to feature outcomes where they anticipate similar treatment effects. GLS weighted indices that account for correlations between outcomes might further increase power.

Second, tests based on indices also yield a meaningful point estimate $\hat{\beta}_{w_g}$, which allows researchers to infer that the regression coefficient is the effect on a (weighted) average of outcomes in a well-specified index. In contrast, the Wald test does not yield an estimate of a (weighted) average treatment effect. If the member hypotheses in the index have similar treatment effects, then estimating Equation (6) leads to a higher-powered test than testing any individual hypothesis in isolation (see Corollary 1.1 in Appendix A2.1). We speculate that the utility of this point estimate, combined with higher power in the case of similar treatment effects, are two reasons why all PAPs that we are aware of elect to test unweighted (or weighted) index hypotheses rather than Wald tests.

Nevertheless, mean indices are not costless. Specifying a weight vector w_g in advance changes the null hypothesis to $\beta_{w_g} = 0$; rejecting this null is sufficient but not necessary to reject $\delta_g = 0$. The change in the null hypothesis increases the possibility of type II error if researcher priors are inaccurate. In particular, if the researcher does not correctly anticipate the full vector of indicator effects and covariance matrix of those effects, then they may design indices which increase the likelihood of type II error for the null of $\delta_g = 0$. For example, they may place high weights on outcomes that are unaffected or are highly correlated with other outcomes; in this case the index test may have lower power than testing individual indicators, even after multiplicity adjustment.

2.4 Optimized Aggregate Indices

The use of an analysis plan opens the opportunity to identify and test other index hypotheses. Specifically, an analysis plan can define an algorithm allowing the data to suggest a high-powered index hypothesis. Suppose that a researcher receives utility from rejecting $H_g : \delta_g = 0$, the family-level hypothesis in Equation (5), but no additional utility from rejecting individual indicator-level hypotheses $H_{hg} : \beta_{hg} = 0$. Then the researcher will wish to maximize power across possible indices composed of elements of \mathcal{H}_g , the index “donor pool”. We define the “optimus index”, which maximizes power across potential indices for group g :

$$\max_{\mathbf{w}_g} \mathbb{P}_{F_{\mathcal{H}_g}} (|\hat{t}_{\bar{y}_{\mathbf{w}_g}}| > t_c). \quad (8)$$

Deriving the optimus index requires knowledge of the DGP, which we denote $F_{\mathcal{H}_g}$. Specifically it requires the coefficients β_{hg} and the covariance matrix Σ_g for all $h \in \mathcal{H}_g$. Let $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ be a $|\mathcal{H}_g| \times 1$ column vector containing β_{hg} for all $h \in \mathcal{H}_g$. In Appendix A2.1 we derive the following proposition for known $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ and Σ_g :

Proposition 1. Consider an index $\bar{y}_{i\mathbf{w}_g} = \mathbf{w}'_g \mathbf{y}_{ig}$. Let $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}$ be the regression coefficient from estimating Equation (7) and let $\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} = \sqrt{\mathbf{V}(\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g})}$. A one-sided test of $\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g} = 0$ based on $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g} / \sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}}$ with critical value $\Phi^{-1}(1 - \alpha)$ has power $\Phi\left(\frac{\beta_{\mathbf{g}}' \mathbf{w}_g}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}'_g \Sigma_g \mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$.

Panel (b) of Figure 1 presents 80% power isoquants for the power-maximizing optimus index against power isoquants from a KLK index, again under the assumption of two independent outcomes.⁹ Panel (c) of Figure 1 presents the same isoquants for the optimus index against those of a Wald test. We see two patterns. First, consistent the discussion in Section 2.3, the optimus index and the KLK index have the same power when the two outcome variables have the same associated treatment effects. This follows as the equal KLK weights are optimal in that case (Corollary 1.2 in Appendix A2.1). However, whenever there is heterogeneity in treatment effects, the optimus test is more powerful, with the 80% isoquant much closer to the center in cases where there is substantial heterogeneity in treatment effects (for example, when one outcome is uncorrelated with treatment). Second, compared to the Wald test, the optimus has greater power except in the case where treatment effects are opposite signed and similar in magnitude.

The challenge with implementing this higher powered index is that researchers are unlikely to have detailed priors about the vector of treatment effects $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ or the covariance matrix Σ_g ; knowledge of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ obviates estimating it. An absence of detailed priors may inform why researchers generally

⁹The figure presumes that we maximize optimus power among sets of weakly monotonic weights, as we propose later.

default to the KLK index, which contains an unweighted average of all indicators in the donor set \mathcal{H}_g . Access to sample estimates, however, can generate a higher powered test. A natural approach for deriving the optimus index is to replace $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ and Σ_g with sample estimates $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{g}}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_g$. Doing so, however, results in an overestimate of the test's power (and the treatment effect size), since the procedure heavily weights outcomes with the largest t -statistics, which would likely experience mean reversion in a hold-out sample. In essence, there is an overfitting problem; specifically, the estimates $\hat{\beta}_{hg}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ are overdispersed relative to the true β_{hg} and Σ_g (the largest $\hat{\beta}_{hg}$ is likely large both because the true β_{hg} is large and because it experienced a sampling error shock of the same sign as β_{hg}). In Appendix A2.2 we demonstrate formally that utilizing the full sample to estimate $\hat{\beta}_{hg}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ forming the optimus using these estimates results in a biased estimator:

Proposition 2. Let $\omega_g = \operatorname{argmax}_{\mathbf{w}_g} \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\beta}'_{\mathbf{g}} \mathbf{w}_g}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}_g \hat{\Sigma}_g \mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$, where $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{g}}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ are sample estimates of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ and Σ_g . Let $\beta_{\omega_g} = E[\beta_{\mathbf{g}}' \omega_g \mid \omega_g]$. Consider an index $\bar{y}_{i\omega_g} = \omega_g' \mathbf{y}_{ig}$. A regression of $\bar{y}_{i\omega_g}$ on T_i yields a biased estimate of β_{ω_g} .

To address this bias we incorporate several machine-learning techniques when deriving the optimus index. First, we utilize sample splitting. With sample splitting, researchers can estimate $\hat{\beta}_{hg}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ in a training sample and then apply the derived optimus index in a test sample. For the simulations and applications we incorporate 5-fold sample splitting (Hastie et al. 2009, p. 242). For each fold, we estimate the optimus index using the data that omits that fold, and then apply the estimated optimus index weights to the omitted fold. Aggregating these indices across folds generates an optimus test that can be implemented on the full sample. As different folds of the data may feature different constructions of the optimus index, rejecting the optimus test using a K -fold approach implies that there is a mean treatment effect on a subset of variables in group G , where the weights of the specific component indicators may be summarized across the full sample.

In Appendix A2.2 we formally demonstrate that estimating Equation (7) using the K -fold version of the optimus test produces an unbiased estimator of the expected weighted average of the elements of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$, with weights determined by the K -fold procedure:

Proposition 3. Randomly assign N observations to K folds. For each fold k , compute weights $\omega_{-k,g} = \operatorname{argmax}_{\mathbf{w}_{-k,g}} \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\beta}'_{-\mathbf{k},\mathbf{g}} \mathbf{w}_{-k,g}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}_{-k,g} \hat{\Sigma}_{-k,g} \mathbf{w}_{-k,g}}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$, where $\hat{\beta}_{-\mathbf{k},\mathbf{g}}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_{-k,g}$ are estimates of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ and Σ_g using all observations not in fold k . Let $\tilde{\mathbf{T}}$ be a demeaned $N \times 1$ vector of treatment assignments and $\tilde{\mathbf{Y}}_g$ be a $N \times 1$ vector of weighted outcomes, with element i equal to $\omega'_{-k,g} \mathbf{y}_{ig}$. The K -fold optimus estimator $(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}' \tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1} \tilde{\mathbf{T}}' \tilde{\mathbf{Y}}_g$ is unbiased for $E[\beta_{\mathbf{g}}' \omega_{-k,g}]$.

Proposition 3 states that the optimus K -fold procedure is unbiased for a weighted average of

treatment coefficients $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$, with weights equal to the expected optimum K -fold weights. Furthermore, the average weights across folds, $\bar{\omega}_g = \frac{1}{K} \sum_k \omega_{-k,g}$, represent an unbiased estimate of the expected weights due to the random assignment of folds. Thus in our applications we report the average optimum weight (across folds) that each outcome receives.

Nevertheless, the t -statistic for the K -fold optimum estimator is not distributed t , because each fold is ultimately used both to form the optimum weights and to estimate the treatment effect (see Corollary 3.1 in Appendix A2.2). Therefore, test statistics from this approach should be tested against critical values generated by randomization inference (that is, randomly permuting treatment across the full sample and implementing the procedure on these random treatment permutations many times).

While the K -fold optimum is unbiased, the overdispersion in estimates of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ may reduce the finite sample efficiency of the estimator. To counteract the overdispersion that tends to arise in estimates of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$, we modify the objective function in Proposition 1 to include a penalty for indices that concentrate weight on a smaller number of indicators. Specifically, we evaluate

$$\max_{\mathbf{w}_g} \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\beta}'_{\mathbf{g}} \mathbf{w}_g}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}'_g \hat{\Sigma}_g \mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right) - \lambda HHI_{\mathbf{w}_g} \quad (9)$$

where $HHI_{\mathbf{w}_g}$ represents the Herfindhal-Hirschmann index (HHI) for weights \mathbf{w}_g (i.e. $\sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}_g} w_{hg}^2$). This penalty index, which by construction must lie on the unit interval, encourages the optimum test to be a well-defined index hypothesis which presents average treatment effects across a range of variables rather than, for example, selecting the single indicator with the most significant t -statistic. In the simulations, we experiment with a range of values of λ to determine which penalty weight generates the highest power index across different DGPs. In the applications we apply the preferred penalty weight from the simulations.¹⁰

In addition, the off-diagonal elements of the estimated covariance matrix, $\hat{\Sigma}_g$, may be highly overdispersed, and small or negative off-diagonal entries can have substantial effects on the indices' predicted power. To address this overdispersion we derive an Empirical Bayes shrinkage estimator for $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ and use it to shrink the off-diagonal elements of $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ in our applications (see Appendix A3).

Finally, it is common in the existing literature to assume that effects on individual indicators, appropriately transformed, are weakly monotonic. This weak monotonicity assumption leverages the underlying latent index model of Equation (5). Formally, it implies that the index loadings,

¹⁰In an actual application one could also tune the penalty weight using cross-validation. Doing so in our applications, however, would be computationally prohibitive, in part because we draw multiple samples to explore performance in different scenarios.

γ_{hg} , are weakly positive (or weakly negative). Enforcing weak monotonicity is also appealing because a mixture of positive and negative weights confounds the directional interpretation of the weighted index, regardless of the underlying DGP.¹¹ Thus researchers may wish to restrict the optimum weights to be weakly monotonic, as we do in our simulations and applications. The only downside to this restriction is that if the true loadings are not weakly monotonic, then an index that mixes positive and negative weights could be more powerful, though less interpretable.

These approaches together leverage an analysis plan to identify an index test which is highly powered, controls type I error, and is an unbiased estimator of a well-defined weighted average of treatment effects across variables in a given family. The cost of doing so is that the researcher does not test the unweighted average across indicators comprising the KLK index; instead, the data determines which outcomes are most strongly associated with treatment in a way that the researcher need not anticipate *ex ante*. The benefit of doing so is a reduction in type II error. We explore the extent of these benefits by simulation in Section 3 and in applications in Sections 4, 5, and 6. Because it maximizes power, the optimum index places more weight on outcomes with larger treatment effects β_h , and which are relatively uncorrelated with each other.¹² These weights are estimated, and may be of inherent interest themselves; we explore these in our applications. Thus, the costs of using the optimum test depend on the difference in inherent interest between the KLK index and alternative weighted average indices of outcome variables in family g . In investigations where the researcher selects the KLK index due to a well-defined theory that suggests homogeneous treatment effects across outcomes in family g , these costs could be significant. In investigations where the researcher anticipates heterogeneous treatment effects but selects a KLK index to maximize statistical power because they have uninformed priors, they may be small.

The optimum test has clear analogues in other tests that have been implemented or proposed in the literature. For example, while the optimum test maximizes the expected t -statistic of the index in the confirmation sample ($E[\hat{\beta}/\hat{\sigma}]$), O'Brien's GLS weights minimize the standard error ($E[\hat{\sigma}]$). As such, if treatment effects are uniform among the hypotheses in a group, the two should converge to the same weighted index. Similarly, while the optimum test focuses on maximizing power to detect mean treatment effects on a subset of indicators in the data, the machine learning based test

¹¹The possibility of a mixture of positive and negative weights is a key reason why researchers often avoid the GLS-weighted index (Pocock et al., 1987; Dallow et al., 2008).

¹²Note that heavily weighted outcomes in this framework are distinct from those that would be selected by running a principal component analysis (PCA) on outcome variables. PCA maximizes the variance of the resulting linear combination and thus places weight on highly correlated outcome variables, rather than relatively independent ones. To the authors' knowledge there is not an analogous procedure for PCA that focuses on treatment effects and incorporates effect heterogeneity.

in Ludwig et al. (2019) (hereafter LMS) flexibly tests the sharp null hypothesis of any treatment effects across the marginal and joint distributions of outcomes.¹³ The finite sample performance of the two estimators, as well as the DGP (i.e. whether the primary treatment effects lie on the mean effects of treatment or on the joint distribution of outcomes), determine which of these two procedures has greater power. As in most econometric applications, imposing additional structure can improve precision if that structure is consistent with the DGP. In our applications we test the optimum index alongside the LMS procedure.

2.5 Optimizing Error Allocations through Gatekeeping

A second contributor to type II error that challenges PAPs in economics is the misallocation of type I error. Tests which limit false discoveries by controlling type I error often treat hypothesis tests concurrently and uniformly. This strategy may lead to allocating type I error to some hypotheses which are of researcher interest only conditional on other rejections; if these latter rejections fail to materialize, then type I error goes wasted.

Gatekeeping strategies define the propagation of type I error across hypotheses. The key insight is that when a test rejects, its type I error can be recycled to another test in a prespecified manner. Formally, a gatekeeping strategy controls FWER at level α across sequential families of hypotheses F_1, \dots, F_M . Each family represents a “gate” that must be passed. In a serial gatekeeping strategy, hypotheses in family F_j are tested iff *all* hypotheses in family F_{j-1} are rejected using p -values that are multiplicity adjusted within family $j - 1$. In a parallel gatekeeping strategy, hypotheses in family F_j are tested iff at least *one* hypothesis in family F_{j-1} is rejected using p -values that are multiplicity adjusted within family $j - 1$ (Dmitrienko and Tamhane 2007). Tree-structured gatekeeping strategies may be most relevant to field experiment practitioners (Dmitrienko et al. 2007; Bretz et al. 2011), as they allow researchers to precisely specify how type I error flows between hypotheses.

As a simple example, consider a field experiment with imperfect compliance and a relatively small sample. A reasonable tree-structured gatekeeping strategy in this context could specify three families: F_1, F_2, F_3 . F_1 contains the first-stage t -statistic, F_2 contains one or more aggregate index tests, and F_3 contains the outcomes comprising the aggregate indices. The researcher first tests F_1 with no multiplicity adjustment. If F_1 rejects — i.e. there was a first-stage effect — she then tests for any aggregate effect on outcomes via the test(s) in F_2 . Failure to reject F_1 and F_2 precludes testing of individual outcomes, but in this context it is unlikely the researcher could

¹³In the Ludwig et al. (2019) case, the researcher inverts the problem and uses split sample and ML methods to predict treatment using outcome variables.

generate compelling findings absent a first-stage or overall effect. If an aggregate index in F_2 rejects, the individual indicators in F_3 comprising that index could be tested in parallel.¹⁴

As the example makes clear, using gatekeeping changes the nature of misallocation error. Without the use of gates, researchers spread type I error across many hypotheses, running the risk of reducing power on false hypotheses by including true ones. Using a gate allows researchers to concentrate type I error on a high-powered test, but that advantage comes with a cost: failing to reject the gate prevents formal testing of the indicators comprising the index test within the gate. Gatekeeping methods are therefore likely to be most useful when there exist tests that have a high probability of rejecting under the alternate hypothesis (e.g. an optimus index) and when the value of some rejections increases conditional on other rejections.

For researchers with latent index hypotheses like Equation (5), the power advantages of aggregate index hypotheses render them as natural gates. For a researcher with a prespecified plan and incomplete knowledge of the underlying DGP, writing a PAP that uses KLK indices as gates may be sensible. For two reasons, however, we anticipate that using optimus tests as gates will have significant advantages for many researchers. First, since the optimus gate maximizes statistical power among tests of mean treatment effects, using an optimus test as a gate both maximizes the chance of producing statistical evidence for a mean treatment effect across a group of variables and minimizes the risk of failing to pass the gate, which would preclude tests of component indicators. The simulations and applications below explore the potential power differences between KLK index and optimus gates. Second, some research designs may be complex, with many potential sets of hypothesis families. In this case, anticipating a network and path for the propagation of type I error across families and hypotheses quickly becomes intractable (Olken, 2015; Banerjee et al., 2020). By selecting indicators within a family which have the strongest relationship to treatment, optimus gates control type I error over indices that are most related to treatment. In many cases, the optimus test may help simplify analysis design by identifying an index of variables with strong treatment effects instead of requiring the researcher to anticipate this set.

¹⁴If the outcomes of the field experiment can be partitioned into G groups, then a reasonable tree-structured gatekeeping strategy in this context could specify four families: F_1, \dots, F_4 . F_1 contains the first-stage t -statistic, F_2 an optimus index test across all outcomes in the study, F_3 optimus or KLK index tests for each group g of the G groups, and F_4 the indicators comprising those indices. The researcher first tests F_1 with no multiplicity adjustment. If F_1 rejects — i.e. there was a first-stage effect — she then tests for any aggregate effect on outcomes using the optimus index in F_2 — a high-powered test suited to her small sample. If F_2 rejects she then tests for effects on the G groups in F_3 , multiplicity adjusting for G tests. Finally, any group that rejects would have its component indicators tested in F_4 , with α/G type I error to allocate across all indicators in that group. Failure to reject a family at any stage precludes testing of subsequent families.

3 Analysis Plan Simulations

When combining our test strategies with FWER control procedures more sophisticated than the Bonferroni correction, it is infeasible to analytically calculate power. We thus turn to Monte Carlo simulations to evaluate the performance of different strategies across a wide range of potential data generating processes. For the optimus test, the simulations also give us insight into reasonable values for the HHI penalty weight in Equation (9).

3.1 Simulation Environment

We perform a series of Monte Carlo simulations that establish the power of our strategies relative to KLK indices or an exhaustive PAP under a variety of scenarios. In this context we use “power” to refer to the probability that a single test rejects or, when considering multiple tests, the expected number of rejections. Power depends on some parameters that the researcher has direct control over (number of tests, use of an aggregate index or gatekeeping strategy), some that she has limited control over (sample size), and others that she has no control over (share of hypotheses that are false, effect sizes, and inter-test correlation structure).

Effect size and sample size are fundamental to statistical power. These two factors interact to generate the sampling distribution of the test statistic, which determines power. The question of what t -statistics a researcher might expect to find thus informs her expected power. To limit the parameter space of interest we conducted a literature review of field experiments with the goal of determining the empirical distribution of published t -statistics (described in Appendix A1). This literature review concluded that the median t -statistic in published field experiments was 2.6. We thus simulated DGPs in which the expected t -statistic for a false hypothesis, $E[t_h | \beta_h \neq 0]$, ranged from 1.5 to 4.0.

To assess the performance of optimus indices and gatekeeping strategies across a range of contexts, we set up the following simulation environment. First, there are H outcomes with H corresponding hypotheses. Of these H hypotheses, H_1 are false, and the remainder true. False hypotheses have a normalized mean “effect size” of $\mu_t = E[t_h | \beta_h \neq 0]$, where the data-generating process draws a coefficient β_h using the degenerate distribution (homogeneous treatment effects) or a gamma distribution with shape parameter $2\mu_t$ and scale parameter $\mu_t/2$ (heterogeneous treatment effects). True hypotheses have $\beta_h = 0$. A fraction r of outcomes are correlated with correlation coefficient ρ , generating correlated tests.

Let the $H \times 1$ column vector β represent the H coefficients. To test for robustness in a broad range of environments we vary total hypotheses (H), the number of false hypotheses (H_1), average

effect size (μ_t), inter-outcome correlations (ρ), the share of outcomes that are correlated (r), and the coefficient DGP (degenerate or gamma distributions) across simulations (see Table 1).

To simulate a K -fold optimus index, we draw $K = 5$ column vectors of coefficients, each dimension $H \times 1$, centered at β . Each element in each vector has variance K , such that the average of $\hat{\beta}_{hk}$ across all K vectors — i.e. the “full-sample coefficient” — has unit variance. The full-sample coefficients are thus distributed standard normal around β and can be treated as t -statistics. We generate two aggregate indices from the H outcomes. One is a KLK index that includes all H outcomes, equally weighted. The second is an optimus index that solves Equation (8). Due to computational constraints, in the simulations we only consider *unweighted* optimus indices, i.e. those in which the non-zero weights are identical.¹⁵ The KLK index is based off of full-sample coefficients, $\hat{\beta}$. The optimus index is derived K times using the K folds. For each fold k , the optimus index is derived using $\hat{\beta}_{-k}$, i.e. coefficients estimated while omitting fold k , and then applied to fold k . We average the resulting K optimus indices across the K folds. We consider optimus objective functions (Equation (9)) that apply values of $\lambda = 0, 0.01, 0.1, 0.5, 1, 2$, and 4 for the HHI penalty weight.

For gatekeeping purposes we apply either the KLK index or the optimus index as an initial gate. For large H this structure simulates a scenario in which the index tests for any effect study-wide and serves as a gate for the entire study; for small H it simulates a scenario in which the index tests for an effect on a subgroup and serves as a gate for that subgroup. If the gate rejects, we test all the coefficients in β . We simulate Wald tests by forming F -statistics from the full-sample coefficients and the known covariance matrix.¹⁶ We also simulate exhaustive PAPs by testing all the coefficients in β without any indices, and we simulate “parallel plans” in which we test an index in parallel with all the coefficients in β (i.e. we simultaneously conduct $H + 1$ tests). We correct for multiple hypothesis testing with a Romano-Wolf (RW) algorithm that controls FWER.^{17,18} To

¹⁵Accordingly, we benchmark the optimus against an unweighted KLK index as opposed to, for example, a GLS-weighted index.

¹⁶The F -statistics take the form $(\hat{\beta}'\Sigma_g^{-1}\hat{\beta}/H)/(\chi_{N-K-H}^2/(N-K-H))$. Σ_g is the known coefficient covariance matrix, and we use $N - K = 220$, the approximate degrees of freedom of our first application.

¹⁷To run these simulations we generate positively correlated test statistics. Most FWER control procedures that incorporate dependence between test statistics, such as the free step-down resampling method or the step-wise method in Romano and Wolf (2005), rely on resampling to determine the correlation structure. Resampling is computationally infeasible in our simulations, so we instead developed a rejection-region FWER control method based off the results in Romano and Wolf (2005) that leverages the known correlation structure of our DGP.

¹⁸In both simulations and applications we use the RW algorithm as we are focused on estimating weighted average treatment effects for an individual treatment on many outcomes. We refer readers in more complicated environments (such as multiple heterogeneous treatment effects or multiple treatment comparisons) to List et al. (2019).

ensure the correct test size for our K -fold optimus index, we simulate the null distribution when setting $\beta = 0$ and reject based on that distribution.

3.2 Simulation Results

Table 1 presents the different parameter values used in the simulations. We simulate power — i.e. the expected number of rejections — for 2,600 combinations of parameter values in total. In the discussion we also focus on “more empirically relevant” parameter values, which include combinations for which $\mu_t \leq 3$ and $H_1/H \leq 0.5$ (i.e. studies with moderate power), based on surveys we conducted of field experiments and PAPs (see Appendix A1). Results for the optimus index depend in part on the value of the HHI penalty weight, λ . In general average power across different parameter values did not vary strongly with λ , but overall the optimus appeared to perform best with $\lambda = 0.5$. We thus report results using $\lambda = 0.5$ for the simulations and applications.

We first consider the scenario in which a researcher wishes to perform an aggregate index or omnibus test. Table 2 characterizes the tradeoffs between using an optimus index or a KLK index. Column (1) reports average power over all parameter combinations, while Columns (2) through (5) report average power over parameter combinations that are more empirically relevant. Columns (3) and (4), in particular, focus on small families ($H \leq 20$) and large families ($H \geq 50$) respectively. Column (3) thus simulates a scenario in which a researcher tests an index corresponding to a subset of hypotheses (e.g. educational outcomes in a conditional cash transfer experiment that measures effects on educational, health, and financial outcomes), while Column (4) simulates a scenario in which a researcher tests for any treatment effect across all outcomes.

Table 2 reports average power of a K -fold optimus index relative to a KLK index. Row 1 summarizes the case in which the researcher tests the index in isolation; thus there is no multiplicity adjustment. In this case, the optimus test is between 1.8 and 3.5 times more powerful than the KLK index on average. Row 2 summarizes the case in which the researcher tests the index in parallel with an exhaustive PAP, multiplicity adjusting all tests. The optimus index averages between 3.6 and 15.9 times the power of the KLK index, with order of magnitude gains in power when there are many hypotheses. In summary, as power becomes more scarce (with increasingly heavier multiplicity adjustments), the advantage of the optimus index becomes more stark.

Row 3 summarizes the average size (number of indicator variables) of an optimus index for each set of parameter combinations. Across all parameter combinations the optimus contains an average of 17.1 variables (Column (1)). Among smaller families, the optimus averages 4.9 variables (Column (3)), and among larger families it averages 18.5 variables (Column (4)). The results demonstrate that the optimus, while smaller than the KLK index, still tends to capture effects

averaged across at least 5 to 20 variables.

The results in Table 2 suggest that researchers should generally prefer the optimus index unless they get many times more utility from rejecting the KLK index. The only case in which the KLK index averages more than half the power of the optimus index is the first row entry — i.e. an index test in isolation — in Column (1). In this scenario, however, it is unlikely that the researcher wishes to test only one hypothesis (the index) across the entire study. More likely, the index serves as a gate that, if passed, allows the researcher to test other hypotheses. When the index serves as a gate, then power becomes more important since rejecting the gate opens the door to further tests. In that context a KLK index is typically unattractive (see Appendix Table A4).

Researchers may test the optimus index in a serial (i.e. as a gate) or parallel (i.e. in conjunction with many other hypotheses) fashion. Table 3 analyzes the relative power of a K -fold optimus-gated plan versus a plan that tests the K -fold optimus index in parallel. The optimus-gated plan first tests an optimus index for evidence of any treatment effect; if the index rejects, it then tests prespecified individual outcomes. The optimus-parallel plan tests the same hypotheses, including the optimus index, but conducts all tests simultaneously (i.e. there is no gate). A value of 1.00 in a cell implies the two strategies have identical power. Each row corresponds to a different weight that the researcher assigns the index test, with a weight of 1.0 implying that rejecting the index is of equivalent value to rejecting a single outcome.

Regardless of weight, the optimus-gated plan is higher power on average than the optimus-parallel plan, with power advantages increasing as the optimus index becomes more intrinsically interesting. The intuition is that when few hypotheses are false, the power of the optimus index is much higher than the power of the typical indicator variable, and it is beneficial to concentrate type I error on the index (via gating). Alternatively, when many hypotheses are false, the optimus index is highly powered, and there is little downside to using it as a gate. Moreover, the strong preference to use the index as a gate when the optimus test is more interesting (i.e. its weight is higher) is clear: if rejecting the index test is more valuable than rejecting a single outcome, then there are substantial benefits to concentrating power on the index test first and, if it rejects, recycling the type I error to test individual outcomes.

To illustrate the distribution of relative power, Figure 2 plots histograms of the relative power of an optimus-gated PAP against a KLK index-gated PAP. Figures 2a and 2b correspond to Columns (1) and (2) of Table 2 respectively.¹⁹ The optimus-gated PAP dominates the KLK index-gated PAP in most cases across all parameter combinations and virtually all cases across more empirically

¹⁹In this figure we apply an index weight of 2 to the optimus index (i.e. rejecting the optimus is twice as interesting as rejecting a single indicator) to ensure that a gatekeeping plan is preferred over a parallel test plan. The KLK index also receives a weight of 2, except in the last two panels, where it receives a weight of 4.

relevant parameter combinations. Figures 2c and 2d plot distributions for small and large families respectively (Columns (3) and (4) of Table 2). The mean power advantage is higher for large families, but in both cases the optimus-gated plan dominates the KLK index-gated plan for virtually all of the plotted parameter combinations. Figures 2e and 2f reproduce 2c and 2d but apply double weight to rejecting the KLK index, relative to the optimus index (a weight of 4 versus 2). Even with double weight on the KLK index, the optimus-gated plan continues to dominate the KLK index-gated plan in most scenarios. Overall, the figure suggests that researchers will prefer an optimus-gated plan over a KLK index-gated plan in most cases, and almost universally prefer it when working with large families.

An omnibus F -test represents an alternative gate that researchers might consider over an index test. In our simulations, a researcher would on average be indifferent between using an F -test gate and an optimus gate if she placed 17% more weight on the F -test than the optimus (i.e. the optimus is on average more powerful). For smaller families ($H \leq 20$) the researcher is indifferent between the two tests when placing 20% less weight on the F -test than the optimus, and for larger families ($H \geq 50$) the researcher is indifferent between the two tests when placing 63% more weight on the F -test than the optimus (i.e. the F -test is slightly more powerful on average in small families and less powerful on average in large ones). When considering a KLK index gate, a researcher would on average be indifferent between using an F -test gate and a KLK gate if he placed approximately 200% more weight on the KLK index than the F -test. The prevalence of KLK-type index tests in analysis plans thus suggests that researchers value index rejections substantially more than omnibus rejections.

For researchers deciding whether to test any index at all, Figure 3 plots histograms of the relative power of optimus-parallel and optimus-gated plans, with index weights of 1 and 3, against an exhaustive PAP with no index tests. Figures 3a and 3b plot distributions for an optimus-parallel plan in which the index receives weights 1 and 3 respectively (with a weight of 1 again implying that rejecting the index is of equivalent value to rejecting a single outcome). The mean power advantage is higher when the optimus weight is higher, but in both cases the optimus-parallel plan dominates the exhaustive PAP for all parameter combinations. Figures 3c and 3d reproduce the first two panels but switch to an optimus-gated plan (which is generally preferred over the parallel plan). The advantage of the optimus-index plans becomes even more decisive.²⁰

²⁰Plans that include indices have a natural advantage over those that do not because they test an extra hypothesis. In some cases, however, an outcome may reject both as part of an index and by itself. Appendix Figure A1 reproduces Figure 3 but includes a double-rejection adjustment, described in Appendix A4, that ensures that researchers do not receive extra utility from rejecting the same hypothesis twice. While the distribution of power ratios shifts left, the plans which include indices dominate an exhaustive PAP in virtually all cases.

In summary, the simulations suggest that adding an optimus test in parallel to a PAP uniformly dominates ignoring the optimus test for researchers who place any nontrivial value on rejecting the optimus test. Furthermore, our results indicate that adopting an optimus-gated plan will be superior to the parallel plan for most researchers, with particularly large gains for those who find the (optimus) index test to be of intrinsic interest or who anticipate relatively low power in their analysis plan. This straightforward conclusion belies the multidimensional nature of these research strategies, with each dimension potentially interacting with the others. In principle researchers may choose no index, an optimus index, or a KLK index, and a gatekeeping test strategy or a parallel test strategy. Appendix A4 examines the relative power of the different combinations of research strategies. It finds that, on average, plans with indices outperform plans without indices, and plans with optimus indices outperform plans with (unweighted) KLK indices. Thus, in most cases, the best strategy for a researcher is to include an optimus index test, typically as a gate, though researchers who are indifferent between rejecting an optimus index or an omnibus F -test might consider the latter as the gate.

4 Application: GoBiFo Revisited

Casey et al. (2012) document the impacts of GoBiFo (GBF), a community-driven development (CDD) intervention in Sierra Leone. To control false discoveries in a survey collecting hundreds of outcomes, they developed a preanalysis plan comprising of 12 KLK index hypotheses. We summarize the Casey et al. (2012) discussion of the institutional details of GoBiFo here before noting several features of the evaluation that make it an appealing choice of an application.

CDD programs are an important outlet for international donor funding, and GBF had a variety of features common to CDD-type programs in the developing world. First, it provided block grants, training, and business start-up capital based on community proposals with a goal of enhancing public-goods access. These grants were substantial relative to local living standards: financial outlays were \$4,667 per village, or about \$100 per household. 43% of grants were used for local public goods (e.g. community centers, sports fields, school repairs, and sanitation); 40% applied to agriculture and livestock or fishing management (e.g. seed multiplication, communal farming, or goat herding); and the remaining 17% went to skills training and small business development initiatives. Casey et al. (2012) describe these facets as the “hardware” of the GBF intervention.

On top of block grants to create new public goods, GBF had several features meant to build democratic institutions, which may be particularly relevant in the traditional authority context of Sierra Leone. GBF established Village Development Committees (VDCs), which both submitted

grant proposals and would play a role in coordinating local governance, and instituted participation requirements for historically marginalized groups, such as women and youth. GBF staff monitored inclusiveness and democratization at substantial cost — monitoring and facilitating this institution building cost about as much as the actual development grants given out. Casey et al. (2012) describe this facet of GBF as the “software” effects of the CDD program.

Casey et al. (2012) introduce a PAP with twelve KLK index hypotheses, listed in Table 4. The PAP also specifies t -statistics and FWER-adjusted p -values, reported in the paper. These 12 index hypotheses are split into two groups. The first three hypotheses relate to the “hardware” of public-goods provision in the village, and in all three cases Casey et al. find strong evidence that the “hardware” of public-goods provision changed. These hypotheses confirm that GBF was successfully implemented and led to an outlay of funds and investment in public goods. The remaining nine hypotheses relate to the “software” of the program, examining a range of outcomes, including participation in collective action, trust of leaders, participation in local governance, and reductions in crime and conflict in the community. Casey et al. (2012) find no statistically significant evidence that GBF affected any of these outcomes. Ultimately they conclude that the program was implemented as planned and led to some expenditures and a change in the public-goods environment, but that there is no evidence that it changed the social institutions governing these villages.

The evaluation of GBF makes for a natural test application of our methods for several reasons. First, as one of the seminal papers introducing preanalysis plans to economists, it represents a carefully thought out and well-regarded PAP that has become a template for PAPs in the literature. Second, the results are mixed. On the one hand, the study had more than adequate statistical power to detect effects on the hardware hypotheses. However, the null effects on the software hypotheses may reflect either a lack of impact on these institutions or a lack of statistical power to detect these effects, given the number of prespecified hypotheses and the indicators selected to join each index hypothesis. As such, there may be an opportunity to learn more about the impacts of this program if procedures with greater statistical power can be leveraged. Finally, the PAP slots naturally into a gatekeeping environment. Casey et al. clearly delineate two meta-hypotheses: that GBF was implemented successfully and influenced the “hardware” of public goods provision, and that GBF influenced the institutional “software” that underlies public goods provision. In our framework, this suggests a natural gate structure to the hypotheses, which we develop below.

We begin by replicating results from Casey et al. (2012). The twelve hypotheses in Casey et al. (2012) are each average treatment effects across the whole sample, estimated by comparing endline treatment and control outcomes. Thus, the primary results in the PAP and the initial presentation

come from estimating

$$y_v = \beta T_v + \gamma X_v + \varepsilon_v$$

where X_v are covariates used for stratification and T_v is an indicator for treatment status. In all cases, the outcome variable y_v refers to a KLK index hypothesis, constructed by normalizing and summing indicator variables which relate to a particular hypothesis about the intervention.

4.1 Alternate Indices and Gates in GoBiFo

The hypotheses presented in GoBiFo are heterogeneous in the number and types of outcome variables which enter each index. Inputs to index hypotheses include outcomes verifiable through administrative data, objective and subjective survey data questions, and behaviors elicited through “supervised community activities” — for example, direct observation of how community members stored and shared a tarpaulin gifted by the survey team. These different data sources lead to heterogeneous index variables, with as few as seven and as many as 47 variables averaged in the construction of each hypothesis’s index. In this context, it seems plausible that treatment effects would be heterogeneous within indices, and that there exist alternate specifications for these indices which might have also yielded similar levels of intrinsic interest.

To generate a gated optimus index approach, we propose that a logical gating meta-hypothesis is whether there are any impacts on the (aggregate) set of hardware hypotheses that serve as a “first stage” for GBF. If GBF had no impacts on any of the indicators in the hardware section — i.e. the program was not implemented and did not deliver public goods — readers would have good cause for skepticism about any positive statistical results that follow. If GBF was implemented successfully, so that some hardware indicators responded to treatment, then it is plausible that the program might have impacts on institutional software. Researcher priors over which hardware elements are critical to generate software change, however, may not be detailed; as such, conducting an optimus-index test for “were there hardware effects?” may serve as a high-powered gate.

The second meta-hypothesis refers to software effects. If GBF had hardware effects, it is natural to test whether there were any software effects. As such, conducting an optimus test over all the variables which comprise the nine software hypotheses represents a high-powered test of this meta-hypothesis.²¹

Finally, if we conclude that there were both hardware and software effects, we may wonder which of the 12 finer hardware and software hypotheses were impacted by GBF. Once again, if

²¹In practice, the GBF PAP prespecified a number of variables which contribute to multiple different hypotheses. In some cases, a variable appears in both hardware and software hypotheses. For our implementation, we eliminate all indicator variables that appear in any hardware hypothesis from the set of candidate software variables.

researchers do not have strong preferences over the weights assigned to indicator variables, they can construct an optimus-style index of the variables belonging to each hypothesis and anticipate greater statistical power than regressions using KLK indices, based on the results in Section 3.2.²²

Figure 4 summarizes the gating structure we use for GBF. For each of the index hypotheses — hardware effects, software effects, and the 12 prespecified hypotheses — we implement the optimus approach using 5-fold CV. Since it is impossible for us to “preregister” the fold assignments, we generate results using many different fold assignments and record the distribution of p -values across the different fold assignments. Specifically, we assign five folds at random 200 times, stratifying each draw of five folds on treatment. In each of these 200 iterations, we compute p -values by comparing actual test statistics to those generated by the same procedure when randomly permuting treatment under the null hypothesis 80 times. When examining multiple comparisons (in the analysis of the 12 hypotheses) we compute p -values using the Romano and Wolf (2005) algorithm. Following Chernozukhov et al. (2018) and Romano and DiCiccio (2019), we conservatively reject a hypothesis only if the median p -value of that hypothesis across the 200 5-fold assignments is less than $\alpha/2$. For optimus indices, we apply a HHI penalty weight of $\lambda = 0.5$ in the objective function (based on results from Section 3).

We benchmark these results against four alternatives. First, we consider the results presented in Casey et al. (2012) based on their original PAP, which tests all hypotheses in parallel. Second, we construct a gatekeeping version of the original PAP, which uses KLK indices for hardware and software outcomes. The hardware index includes all variables from Hypotheses 1–3, and the software index includes all variables from Hypotheses 4–12 (omitting any variables also classified as hardware). Third, we implement an omnibus F -test (Wald) by regressing treatment on the relevant outcome indicators in each gate, as in Equation 4, and testing the joint hypothesis that all indicators are unrelated to treatment. Fourth, we apply the Ludwig et al. (2019) omnibus procedure to the same gates. To implement LMS we use an ensemble that combines a random forest with an elastic net to predict treatment using the hardware dependent variables as a first gate; if we pass that gate then we do the same for software variables. As Ludwig et al. (2019) also requires a sample split, we follow the same procedure as for the optimus tests, estimating the LMS procedure on 200 sets of five folds and computing p -values via permutation of the treatment indicator.

²²If some of the hypotheses reject, the individual indicator hypotheses can then be tested in sequence if the larger index gate hypotheses are rejected. To preserve the correct size of tests in this case, however, one needs to avoid using sharpened p -values, because sharpened p -values recycle type I error within a parallel set of tests until it is exhausted (e.g. one could not apply Romano-Wolf p -values). For brevity, we do not present those results here.

4.2 GoBiFo Results

In Table 5 we consider whether we reject the null of no hardware effects using the original PAP, KLK index, optimus gate, Wald, and LMS approaches. All five approaches reject the hardware gate. We therefore conclude that any of these approaches would have (correctly) concluded that GoBiFo had an effect on hardware outcomes, though the specific interpretations of each rejection differ (as discussed in Section 2.4).

Since each approach rejects the hardware gate, we then consider whether GBF had impacts on software variables. Recall that the original PAP for GBF failed to reject the null hypothesis that GBF had no effect on software outcomes. Column (1) shows that combining all software variables into a single KLK index does not change this conclusion. Columns (3) and (4) similarly demonstrate that the F and LMS omnibus tests do not reject the null hypothesis of no relationship between software variables and treatment; the median LMS p -value is 0.34, and the F -test p -value is 0.07. In contrast, the optimus approach, reported in Column (2), decisively rejects the null hypothesis of no software effects. Using the 5-fold optimus, the median p -value is 0.00, so that we reject the null hypothesis that there was no relationship between GBF and software variables at the conventional 5% significance level. On average, the optimus test produces an index that is a weighted average of 22.8 indicator variables, 19 of which receive an average weight greater than 2.5%, and none of which receive an average weight above 10%.²³ Appendix Table A1 reports the variables appearing most frequently in the software optimus and their associated average weights.

Casey et al. (2012) note that one software variable — whether there is a community farm — may be miscategorized as software, as it may have been directly built by the CDD grant. The third row repeats the software optimus gate but excludes this variable; it still rejects the null based on an average of 22 variables. None of the other test procedures comes close to rejecting the null when excluding this variable.

In summary, when applying an optimus test we conclude that GBF affected some software outcomes. Comparing point estimates between the KLK index (Column (1)) and the optimus (Column (2)) illustrates why we see such a large difference. Column (1) indicates that GBF is associated with a 0.03 standard deviation average increase across 144 distinct software indicators; Column (2) indicates that across the 22.8 components of the optimus test, the weighted average effect is 0.15 standard deviations. Notably, the gap between the two estimates is of similar magnitude to what we would expect if the treatment effects on all indicators excluded by the optimus were zero.

Using the gated approach, only the optimus test has sufficient power to pass the software gate.

²³We count an indicator as appearing in the index if it receives at least as much weight as it would in a KLK index; in this case that corresponds to $0.007 = \frac{1}{144}$.

After passing the gate we can then test which of the underlying hypotheses contribute to this rejection. We construct 12 optimus indices for the 12 underlying hypotheses and test them in parallel, computing p -values using the Romano and Wolf (2005) algorithm. As presented in Table 4, we find that the optimus gate approach rejects each of the three individual hardware hypotheses with large weighted average effect sizes. Among the software hypotheses, only Hypothesis 6 (“GoBiFo changes local systems of authority, including the role and perception of traditional leaders (chiefs)”) approaches marginal significance; adjusting for the 12 tested hypotheses, the median Romano-Wolf p -value of 0.0625 would not quite reject at the 10% level based on the conservative Chernozukhov et al. (2018) bound.²⁴

Examining the indicator variables that receive the greatest weight in the software optimus index (Appendix Table A1) yields insights as to why we find limited evidence to reject individual software hypotheses. First, the five most heavily weighted variables each correspond to different underlying software hypotheses. Summing across all indicator components of the optimus, the single hypothesis receiving the greatest aggregate weight is the marginally-significant Hypothesis 6; weights on indicators comprising Hypothesis 6 sum to 27% of the total weight.²⁵ This pattern suggests that the overall software effects were spread across the software hypotheses rather than concentrated within one of them. Rather than belonging to a specific hypothesis proposed in the PAP, what stands out in the variables selected for heavy weights is that they tend to focus on more objective measurements, which are potentially more “upstream” in the theory of change, rather than downstream and subjective indicators, such as those which examine beliefs and attitudes. In addition to the presence of a community farm (Hypothesis 4), heavily weighted indicators include whether the respondent has been in a recent physical fight (H11); whether minutes were taken at a recent village council meeting (H5); whether they are a member of a women’s group (H8); whether newly elected chiefs were young (H6); and whether the respondents can accurately name the year of the next general election (H9). This trend indicates that the optimus is identifying treatment effects that exist across an index of relatively objective measurements, perhaps because of measurement error in subjective assessments or the amount of time needed for attitudinal change.

We conclude that GoBiFo had a meaningful effect on a subset of the software outcomes, that

²⁴The optimus test for both Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 4, “Participation in GoBiFo increases collective action and contributions to public good” have median naive p -values below 0.025, so that either of these might reject in an analysis plan with fewer prespecified hypotheses. Interestingly, the optimus test for H4 yields a greater than 70% weight on the community farm variable, lending support to the hypothesis that that variable is misclassified hardware (included indicators and weights for each hypothesis are presented in Appendix Table A1).

²⁵Two of the heavily-weighted indicators are components of both Hypothesis 6 and another hypothesis (in one case Hypothesis 5, and in another Hypothesis 12); the repeated use of the same indicators across hypotheses indicates some of the challenges in partitioning hypotheses in institutional analysis.

that effect was distributed across prespecified hypotheses about software, and that of the considered approaches only the gated optimus test had the statistical power to detect it. In follow-up work focused on community-level measures, Casey et al. (2023) similarly find the presence of modest, but statistically significant short and long-run institutional effects at the community level, supporting these conclusions.

5 Application: Cash and Livelihoods in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Our second application is novel to the literature. This application evaluates two programs funded by USAID and implemented in from 2019 to 2022 in Walungu, an isolated area in the Eastern DRC. The first of these programs, termed Integrated Youth Development Activities (IYDA), aimed to boost youth livelihoods through several interventions. Youth were encouraged to form savings and lending groups, which were used as the basic infrastructure for a range of activities, including trainings in financial literacy, work-readiness, and entrepreneurial skills. Participating youth received cash grants of about \$100 in early 2021, with a goal of kickstarting new businesses and providing resilience to shocks, COVID-related or otherwise. The program was implemented in 100 randomly selected villages (out of 180), screened based on estimated population size; ultimately savings and lending groups were formed and program activities initiated in three-quarters of these 100 villages. In the second program, one youth per household in 50 of the 100 treatment villages (also randomly selected) received large cash transfers of \$750. We thus test two potential hypotheses. First, does IYDA boost development outcomes? Second, are large cash transfers, combined with IYDA, effective at boosting development outcomes?²⁶

These programs were conducted as part of a larger “cash benchmarking” exercise meant to explore the effectiveness of cash versus direct development programming in several sites (see also McIntosh and Zeitlin (2021, 2022)). It represents an interesting application of optimus gates for several reasons. First, there exist many assessments of the impacts of large cash transfers (Aggarwal et al., 2022; Egger et al., 2019; Haushofer and Shapiro, 2016; McIntosh and Zeitlin, 2021, 2022). As such, we have reasonably-informed priors about what outcomes large cash transfers impact in a development context. For example, each of the cited papers finds that large unconditional cash transfers improve outcomes related to food security and non-durable consumption.

²⁶The design of this experiment does not allow us to directly compare large cash transfers against IYDA through a 2x2 design. This design was established before the current research team, including one of the authors of this paper (Magruder), took over leadership of the project.

Several (Aggarwal et al., 2022; Haushofer and Shapiro, 2016; McIntosh and Zeitlin, 2021, 2022) find that it also improves subjective well-being, and some but not all studies find that cash grants increase business assets and investments. Second, a concern with the goal of cash benchmarking is that assets and food security may be relatively easy to measure, in contrast to the impacts of building institutions like savings groups and life-skills trainings. While the implementing partner of the IYDA intervention anticipated impacts on food security and business investment, it also anticipated that the largest impacts of these programs would be on local institutions and psychosocial resilience outcomes, for which, as demonstrated in Section 4, retaining statistical power along a large set of candidate measurements can be challenging.

For this project, we focus on short-run results from a midline survey. Based on discussions with the two implementing partners, we developed the gated analysis plan presented in Figure 5. In the first gate, we assess whether either program took place in the treatment villages, compared to the control villages. We perform this test with α type I error. If we fail to reject this gate, we conclude that, at a minimum, the survey team coverage did not match the implementation activities completed by the partners. In that case, any downstream effects of either program would likely not be credible. Second, we examine two parallel gates. The first, focused on resilience outcomes, examines impacts on a range of psychosocial and institutional resilience measurements proposed by USAID’s preferred resilience tool. The second, focused on financial and economic outcomes, covers many of the outcomes robustly associated with cash elsewhere, including food security and asset investment. To avoid a preference for either set of outcomes, we assess each in parallel with $\alpha/2$ type I error. In each case, if we pass the gate, we examine subfamilies of outcomes. Financial subfamilies are financial and work outcomes, and resilience subfamilies are adaptive capacity and absorptive capacity, again derived from USAID’s preferred tool. Each of these subfamilies receives $\alpha/4$ type I error and are only tested if the larger enclosing gate rejects. Appendix Tables A6, A7, and A8 list the specific outcomes enclosed by each of these gates.

Based on discussions with the USAID team and the implementing partners, we pre-specified that we would implement this analysis plan both via KLK indices and optimus gates. In each case we estimate the equation

$$y_{iv} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IYDA_v + \beta_2 Cash_v + \gamma X_{iv} + u_{iv} \quad (10)$$

where $IYDA_v$ indicates whether village v was assigned to IYDA, $Cash_v$ indicates whether village v was assigned to receive large cash transfers, and X_{iv} are pre-specified covariates (gender, age, household size, and stratifying region and village size variables). In forming the optimus test, we estimate the weights separately for each treatment, so that we can maximize power for each treatment, and we include the other treatment as a control. While not pre-specified, for comparison

purposes we also present an F -test in a reverse regression, where we include the relevant treatment variable ($IYDA_v$ or $Cash_v$) on the left-hand side and all outcomes belonging to the relevant family on the right-hand side, as well as the other treatment variable and covariates X_{iv} . We conduct an F -test on the coefficients of the outcomes to compare both the optimus and KLK approaches to the Wald benchmark. In addition, we implement the LMS omnibus test, again predicting treatment via an ensemble random forest and elastic net as in the GBF application.

Panel A of Table 6 reports the results from this analysis plan for the IYDA program. The first row indicates that, under either the KLK or optimus plan, we successfully detect that the IYDA program was implemented in treatment villages. In this case, the highest power derives from the KLK index; Appendix Table A6 reveals that this occurs because the component indicators have fairly homogeneous effect sizes — nearly all have a naive p -value between 0.06 and 0.23. This is the case, highlighted in Panels (a) and (b) of Figure 1, where the most powerful index is the KLK index, which also has power advantages over the Wald test. Nonetheless, the optimus index also detects (at $p < 0.05$) that the program was implemented. The F and LMS omnibus tests do not detect that the IYDA program was implemented at $\alpha < 0.05$.

Since the KLK and optimus analysis plans pass the initial gate, we can examine downstream resilience and economic outcomes. The next two rows of Table 6 indicate that we fail to reject the hypothesis that either family of outcomes changed with IYDA under either analysis plan.²⁷ Once again, Appendix Table A6 suggests a reason why: while there was a detectable difference in program activities in treatment versus control villages, those differences are objectively small, ranging between 0.1 and 0.34 standard deviations across different measures. This may be due to the voluntary nature of treatment; a youth would need to opt-in to participating in savings groups and livelihoods trainings, and many youths in control villages already participate in savings groups.

Nevertheless, conclusions differ across the four estimation approaches. With either the KLK or optimus index, we detect the presence of program activities in treatment villages. This is a meaningful outcome to implementation partners, who were tasked with implementing development programs in a challenging context. With the KLK index, we fail to reject that an evenly-weighted average of economic outcomes or resilience outcomes changed when the program was implemented. With the optimus index, we fail to identify *any* weighted average of economic or resilience outcomes which is related to the presence of IYDA. With the F and LMS omnibus tests, we

²⁷The optimus test for IYDA effects on resilience outcomes did not identify a consistent sign across folds, likely because the most individually significant variable (resp. discusses savings with others) has a positive sign, while the majority of other resilience variables are negatively related to IYDA. This pattern generates the point estimate of 0 and p -value of 1 on the test. See Appendix Tables A6, A7, and A8 for outcome-by-outcome relationships with treatment.

do not find evidence that the IYDA program was implemented successfully in treatment villages.²⁸

Panel B of Table 6 reports estimated effects of cash transfers. Under any estimation strategy we detect that cash transfers were differentially implemented in the villages assigned to receive cash ($p < 0.001$ in all cases). Appendix Table A6 demonstrates that the optimus index (correctly) identifies the variables related to treatment, as it places 86% of weight on either “Respondent received a cash transfer” or “amount of cash transfers received.” Thus, the KLK and omnibus approaches demonstrate that there is on average statistical evidence of all program activities in cash villages, while the optimus approach provides additional evidence that cash was distributed in cash villages.

Comparing Panel B to Panel A reveals that cash differs from IYDA in that the next gate demonstrates downstream effects. In the KLK, optimus, and Wald tests we reject the hypothesis that economic outcomes are not related to receiving cash. Examining the optimus weights in Appendix Table A8, we see that the weight of the index is focused on five variables: food security, worked for self, hours worked, savings, and remittances received. Thus, with the KLK index, we conclude that the average of 18 economic variables increased by 0.09 standard deviations with cash. With the optimus, we conclude that a weighted average of food security, labor supply, and financial position improved by 0.17 standard deviations with cash. We note that these outcomes accord well with results in the literature: absent careful curation, the optimus index selected a group of outcomes similar to those elsewhere in the literature. With the Wald test, we conclude that 18 outcomes jointly predict receiving cash. Looking at the two economic outcome subfamilies, we see that the KLK and Wald tests identify impacts on financial outcomes, while the optimus is not quite significant on financial outcomes for the $\alpha < 0.025$ error in this part of the analysis tree. None identify impacts on work outcomes at $\alpha < 0.025$, though all come close to significance.

We also observe that the optimus approach detects that Cash affects resilience outcomes, while the KLK index fails to do so (the omnibus F -test is close to significance at $\alpha < 0.025$). With the F -test, we do not observe a point estimate as to whether resilience improves or deteriorates with cash; however, the negative optimus point estimate implies, surprisingly, the latter. Examining the optimus weights in Appendix Table A7, we see that the majority of estimated weight concentrates on three variables: locus of control, participation in household financial decisions, and aspirations for their childrens’ futures. Based on these results, we conclude that large cash transfers affected a decline in a sense of agency for these youth. One possible explanation is that other household members ultimately exerted control over household consumption decisions in response to the cash transfer, limiting the sense of agency among the youthful recipients.²⁹ Thus, with the KLK index

²⁸We find no evidence that the IYDA intervention had downstream effects with any of the four tests.

²⁹Another explanation is that access to this magnitude of money happened without any actions or agency on the part

we fail to reject that cash was associated with an unweighted index of 21 resilience outcomes; with a Wald approach we conclude that 21 resilience outcomes are marginally significantly related to cash; and with the optimus test we conclude that access to cash reduced beliefs in own agency by 0.14 standard deviations. While this result is novel in the literature on cash transfers, we note that both the power of the optimus test and the youthfulness of the beneficiaries may each have contributed to identifying it.

6 Application: The Oregon Health Insurance Experiment

As a final application we consider a high-profile health insurance lottery in Oregon. The lottery enrolled tens of thousands applicants and randomly assigned Medicaid to a subset. Finkelstein et al. (2012) documents causal effects on health care utilization and financial and health outcomes. Many t -statistics for individual outcomes range between 5 and 10, so we treat OHIE as an opportunity to test the performance of our techniques when the “true” DGP is known. To do this we take small samples of the OHIE data, compare the power of an optimus-gated analysis plan to plans gated by a KLK index or an omnibus test, and verify that the conclusions are consistent with the true DGP.

Appendix A5 details the background, methodology, and results from the OHIE application. Briefly, at a 10% sample of the original data, all analytic approaches consistently conclude that the OHIE lottery affected Medicaid coverage. The optimus and F omnibus tests correctly reject the null hypothesis of no effect on any of 44 outcomes 71% and 73% of the time respectively, while the KLK index and LMS omnibus tests reject only 58% and 38% of the time. In smaller (8%) and larger (12% and 15%) samples the optimus consistently outperforms all other tests. Leveraging the full dataset, we find that over 80% of the optimus weight gets assigned to variables with clear evidence of treatment effects. Finally, when testing three subfamilies — utilization, health, and financial outcomes — we find that the optimus index outperforms the KLK index and F and LMS omnibus tests for all three subfamilies.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

Analysis plans allow researchers to limit the rate of false discoveries through statistical adjustments for multiple inference. They do so at a cost: formal tests for multiple inference are only available for hypotheses which can be registered in an analysis plan, and these adjustments reduce power. If researchers fail to anticipate which indicators are most impacted by treatment, or can be measured

of the recipients, which may have encouraged beliefs on the importance of fate versus direct action.

with the least error, power concerns compound. These issues may lead to analysis plans which foreclose true discoveries in attempts to avoid false ones. In large part for this reason, Banerjee et al. (2020) emphasize the need for a central role of secondary evidence in academic research, even at the risk of promoting results based on type I errors.

In this paper, we suggest an alternate approach for analysis plans. Rather than restricting attention to the types of tests which can be easily anticipated, researchers can allow the data to inform the most powerful tests to be run. In a sense, specifying straightforward and easily anticipatable tests is an informal means of controlling false discoveries that becomes redundant when an analysis plan allows formal control. This fact allows researchers to specify data-driven analysis plans that can maximize the power of statistical tests. We propose the optimus gate as a method for doing so: by maximizing power among weighted index hypotheses and directing type I error to that high-power index test, researchers can be guaranteed a high power, easily interpretable test. We demonstrate in simulations and in three applications that this approach has substantial power advantages over other available approaches. The tradeoff for this power is a loss of control over which indices are being tested; researchers with strong priors over heterogeneity in treatment effects and who anticipate that a test based on a particular weighted average treatment effect is of more inherent interest than tests based on alternate weighted average treatment effects should consider whether the gains in statistical power justify the loss of control.

The other challenge to the use of analysis plans to control false discoveries is complexity in specifying algorithmic approaches. The optimus gate approach not only maximizes power among available index hypotheses, it can also be straightforward to prespecify, as a researcher need only categorize indicators into families. In many cases, particularly for researchers following the recommendations of Banerjee et al. (2020) in forming a preanalysis plan, these families may be relatively simple. For example, a straightforward gating structure would be to categorize indicators into first stage indicators which document whether a program was successfully implemented and second stage indicators which indicate whether a successfully implemented program influenced important economic outcomes. A simple preanalysis plan may set optimus gates for the first stage hypothesis followed by the second, and in doing so would guarantee that researchers have powerful tests of the correct size for whether the program was implemented and whether it impacted outcomes. Researchers with more time and stronger priors over which potential categories of effects a program may have can add a third set of gates which test several of these categories in parallel; an additional advantage of the optimus gate approach is that such a plan would not harm the statistical power of the first two primary tests.

While the optimus approach will not be preferred in all scenarios, it can be attractive in many

scenarios in which researchers anticipate testing large numbers of outcomes with heterogeneous effect sizes in a limited sample. In our experience this scenario is well-represented among field experiments.

8 References

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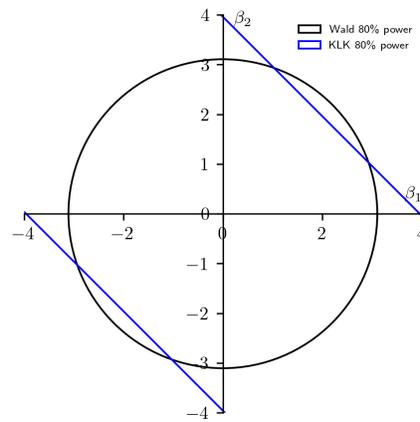
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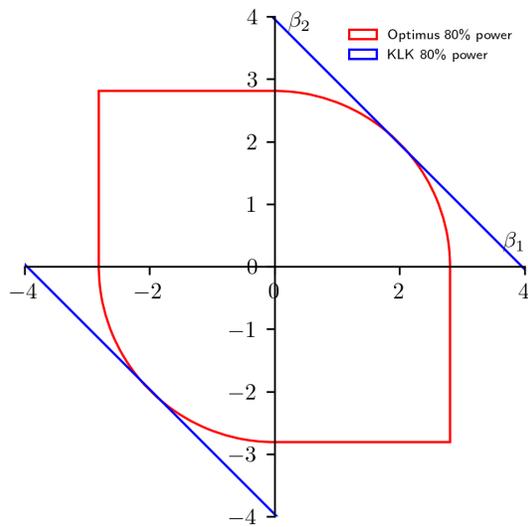
Figures and Tables

Figure 1: 80% Power Isoquants for Aggregate Tests

(a) KLK versus Wald



(b) Optimus versus KLK



(c) Optimus versus Wald

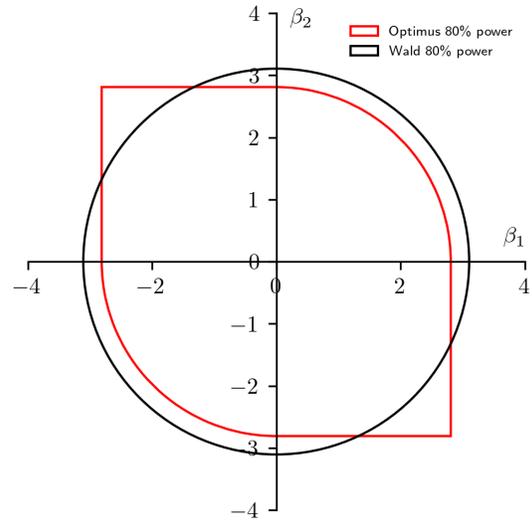
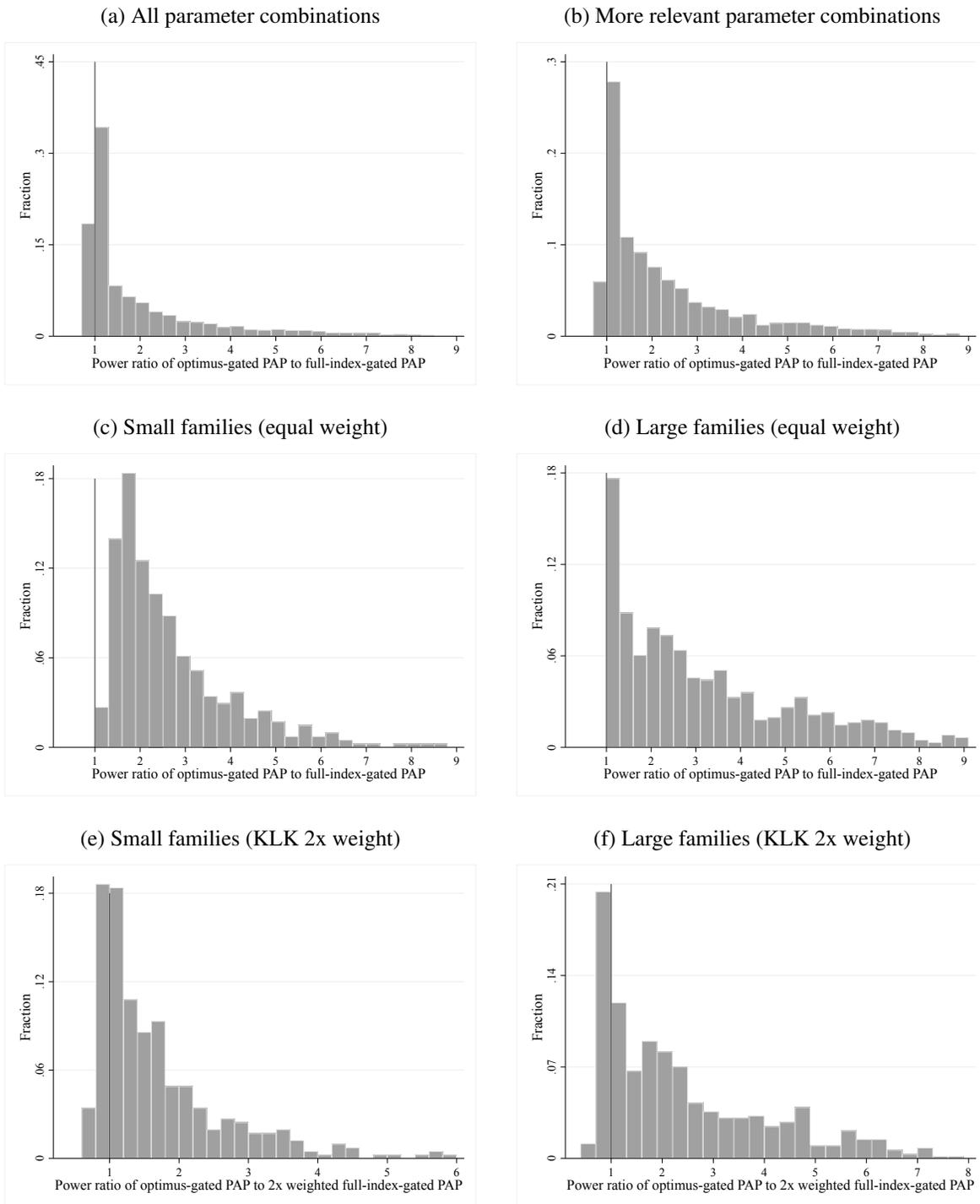


Figure 2: Distribution of Relative Power of Optimus versus KLK Index Gatekeeping Strategy



Notes: Panels (a) and (b) correspond to Columns (1) and (2) of Table 2 respectively, Panels (c) and (e) correspond to Column (3), and Panels (d) and (f) correspond to Column (4).

Figure 3: Distribution of Relative Power of Optimus Plans versus Exhaustive PAP

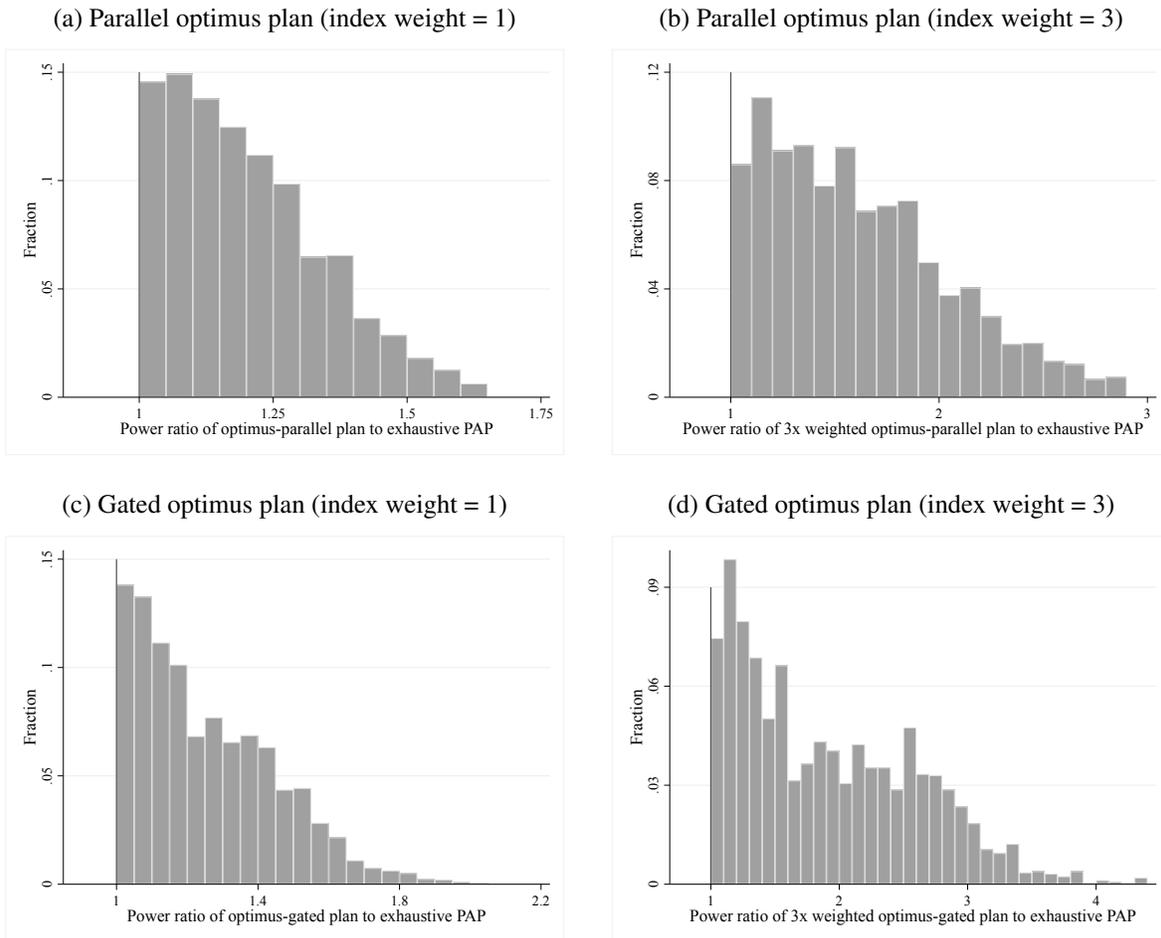


Figure 4: Optimus Gate analysis plan for Casey et al. (2012)

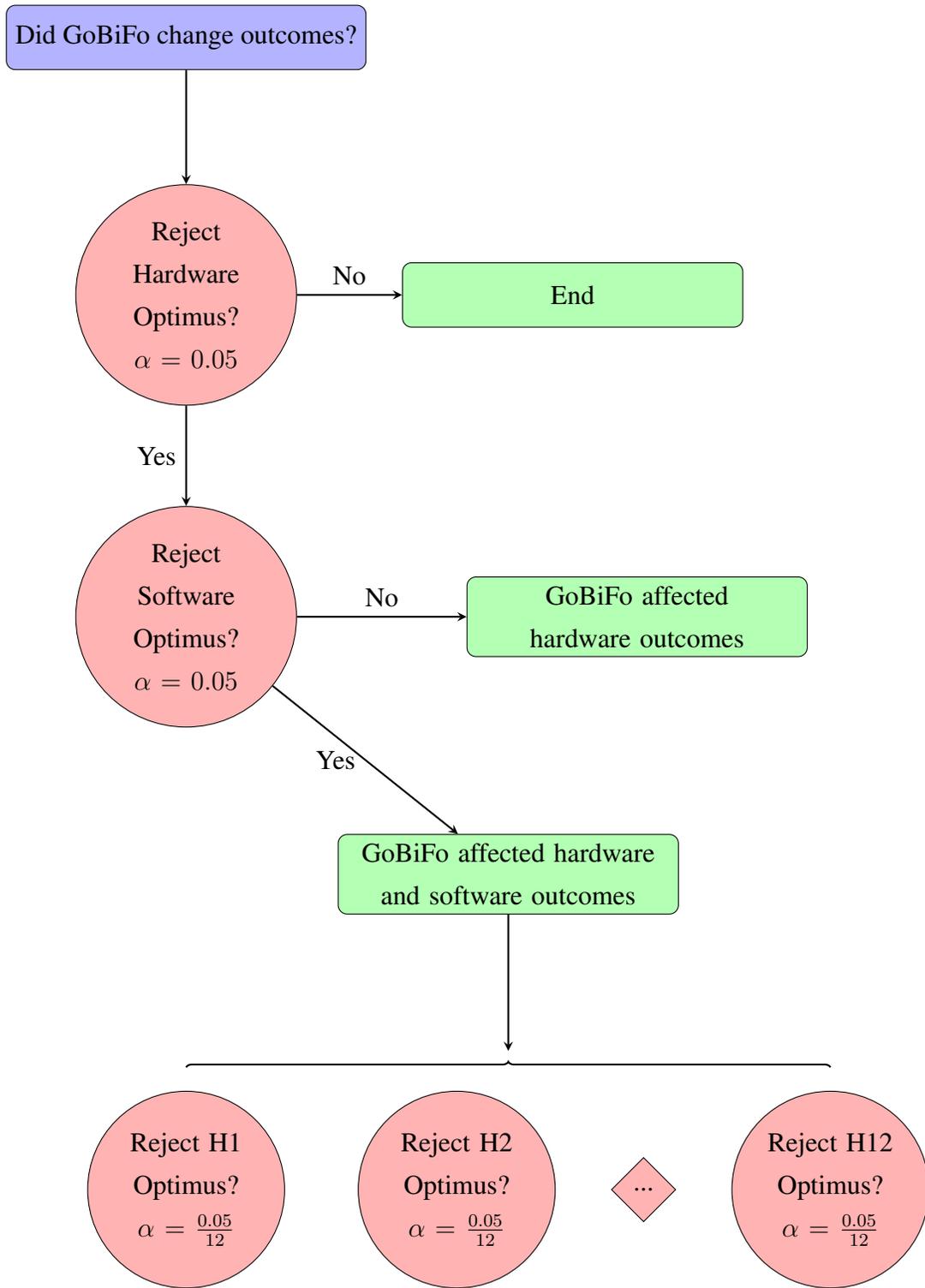


Figure 5: Gated Analysis Plan for DRC Cash and Livelihoods

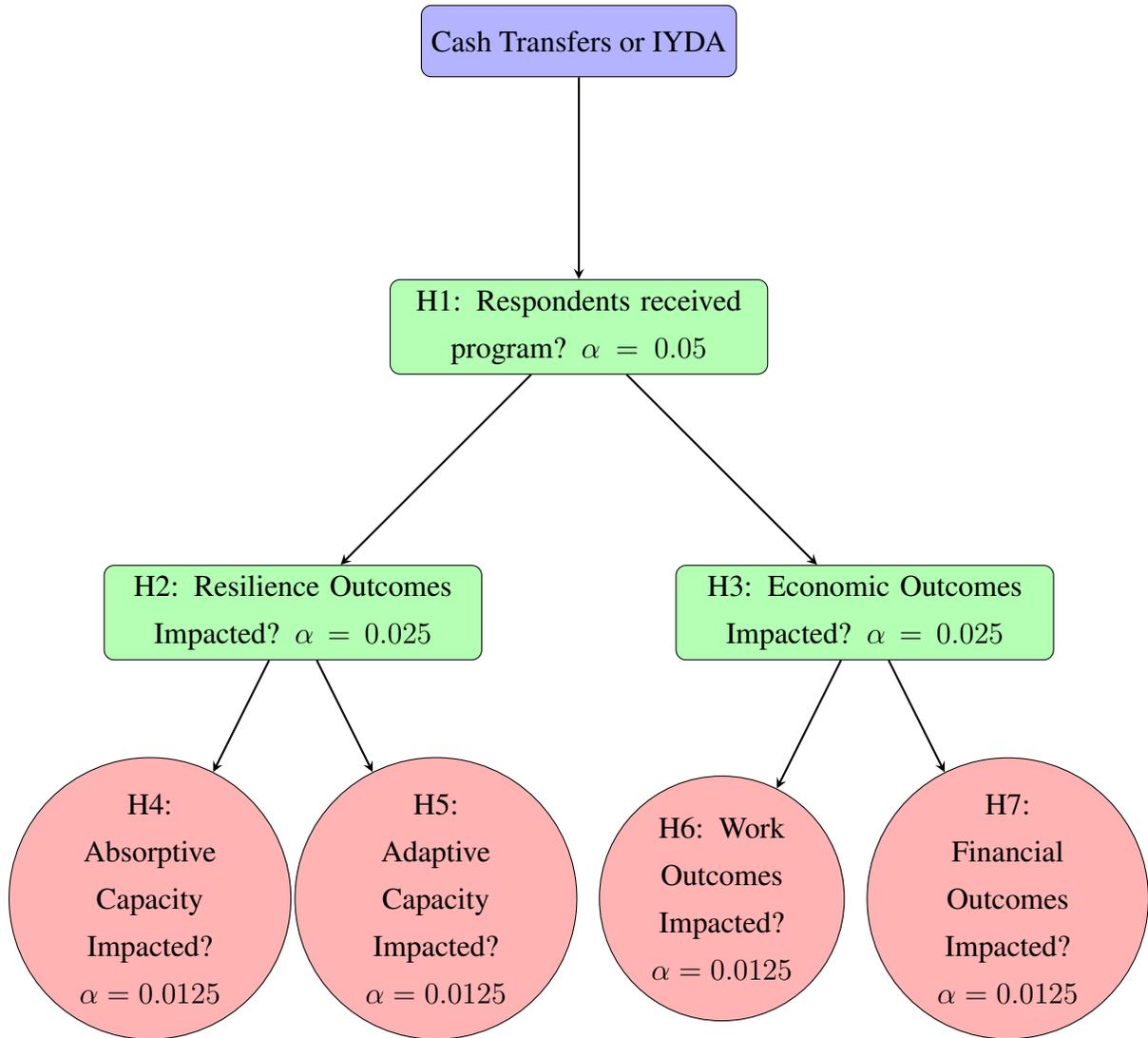


Table 1: Simulation Parameter Values

Parameter	Values	Mean	Std Dev
Average “effect size” ($E[t_h \mid \beta_h \neq 0]$)	1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 4.0	2.6	0.9
Total hypotheses (H)	10, 20, 50, 100, 200	76	69
Share false (H_1/H)	0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 1.0	0.45	0.35
Correlation between outcomes (ρ)	0, 0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 0.7	0.35	0.25
Share of outcomes correlated (r)	0.2, 0.5, 1.0	0.6	0.34

Table 2: Relative Power of Optimus Index v. KLK Index

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Index test only	1.77	2.24	2.55	3.28	3.48
Index test in parallel w/PAP	3.64	5.98	6.07	15.9	13.8
Optimus index size	17.1	14.5	4.9	18.5	13.8
<i>Parameter restrictions:</i>					
Total hypotheses (H)			≤ 20	≥ 50	
Share false (H_1/H)		≤ 0.5	≤ 0.2	≤ 0.2	0.1
Average effect size (μ_t)		≤ 3.0	≤ 3.0	≤ 3.0	≤ 2.5
Combinations	2,600	1,560	416	624	390

Notes: Each cell reports the geometric mean power ratio of an optimus index to a KLK index. The index is tested by itself (first row) or in parallel with an exhaustive PAP (second row).

Table 3: Relative Power of Optimus-Gated Plans v. Optimus-Parallel Plans

<i>Optimus-index weight:</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.0	1.04	1.06	1.05	1.08	1.07
2.0	1.11	1.17	1.24	1.19	1.30
3.0	1.15	1.24	1.37	1.27	1.46
4.0	1.18	1.29	1.47	1.32	1.59
5.0	1.21	1.33	1.54	1.37	1.69
<i>Parameter restrictions:</i>					
Total hypotheses (H)			≤ 20	≥ 50	
Share false (H_1/H)		≤ 0.5	≤ 0.2	≤ 0.2	0.1
Average effect size (μ_t)		≤ 3.0	≤ 3.0	≤ 3.0	≤ 2.5
Combinations	2,600	1,560	416	624	390

Notes: Each cell reports, for a given optimus-index weight, the geometric mean power ratio of an optimus-index gated exhaustive PAP to an exhaustive PAP that tests the optimus index in parallel with the other hypotheses.

Table 4: GoBiFo Results: Individual Hypotheses

	(1) KLK Index	(2) Optimus	(3) KLK Index Size	(4) Optimus Index Size
<i>Hardware</i>				
H1: GoBiFo Program Implementation	0.695 [0.00]	1.633 [0.000]	7	2.5
H2: Participation in GoBiFo improves the quality of local public service infrastructure	0.206 [0.00]	0.494 [0.000]	18	6.8
H3: Participation in GoBiFo improves General Economic Welfare	0.362 [0.00]	1.864 [0.000]	15	2.9
<i>Software</i>				
H4: Participation in GoBiFo increases collective action and contributions to public goods.	-0.001 [1]	0.288 [.15]	11	2.3
H5: GoBiFo increases inclusion and participation in community planning and implementation	-0.002 [1]	-0.004 [.962]	46	0.9
H6: GoBiFo challenges local systems of authority	0.052 [.74]	0.183 [.063]	25	6.4
H7: Participation in GoBiFo increases trust	0.036 [1]	0.043 [.938]	12	1.7
H8: Participation in GoBiFo builds and strengthens community groups and networks	0.027 [1]	0.209 [.35]	15	2.6
H9: Participation in GoBiFo increases access to information about local governance	0.01 [1]	0.043 [.925]	15	2.6
H10: GoBiFo increases public participation in local governance	-0.028 [1]	-0.041 [.95]	14	0.8
H11: By increasing trust, GoBiFo reduces crime and conflict in the community.	0.014 [1]	0.139 [.681]	8	2.2
H12: GoBiFo changes political and social attitudes	0.035 [1]	0.062 [.887]	9	2.5

Notes: Brackets contain Romano-Wolf p -values that control FWER across all 12 hypotheses, computed based on 80 permutations of treatment under the null hypothesis. Optimus index p -values represent the median RW p -value across 200 sets of 5-fold assignments (computed based on 80 permutations of treatment under the null hypothesis per set of fold assignments).

Table 5: GoBiFo Results: Gating Hypotheses

	(1) KLK Index	(2) Optimus	(3) F Omnibus	(4) LMS Omnibus	(5) KLK Index Size	(6) Optimus Index Size
Hardware	0.292 [0.000]	1.191 [0.000]	[0.000]	[0.000]	39	11.3
Software	0.014 [.473]	0.151 [0.000]	[0.066]	[.338]	144	22.8
Software (no Community Farm)	0.011 [.578]	0.123 [.013]	[.198]	[.419]	143	22.1

Notes: Brackets contain p -values. Optimus and LMS omnibus p -values represent the median p -value across 200 sets of 5-fold assignments, computed based on 80 permutations of treatment under the null hypothesis per set of fold assignments.

Table 6: DRC results: Effects of IYDA and Cash under different analysis plans

A. IYDA Treatment					
Hypothesis	(1) KLK	(2) Optimus	(3) F Omnibus	(4) LMS Omnibus	(5) N
Program Activities	0.185 [0.005]	0.138 [0.020]	[0.159]	[0.450]	1,743
Resilience Capacities	-0.002 [0.953]	0 [1.000]			1,415
Economic Outcomes	0.038 [0.109]	0.05 [0.310]			1,415
B. Cash Transfer Treatment					
Program Activities	0.893 [0.000]	2.108 [0.000]	[0.000]	[0.000]	1,743
Resilience Capacities	-0.028 [0.443]	-0.144 [0.025]	[0.029]	[0.060]	1,415
Economic Outcomes	0.092 [0.002]	0.167 [0.015]	[0.009]	[0.110]	1,415
<i>Resilience Subfamilies</i>					
Absorptive Capacity		-0.191 [0.065]			1,415
Adaptive Capacity		-0.124 [0.065]			1,415
<i>Economic Subfamilies</i>					
Work Outcomes	0.059 [0.079]	0.149 [0.115]	[0.065]		1,415
Financial Outcomes	0.108 [0.010]	0.17 [0.055]	[0.015]		1,415

Notes: All optimus estimations present results from a single sample-split using a pre-specified randomization seed. Romano-Wolf p -values in brackets; p -values account for stratification and village-level clusters in treatment assignment.

Appendix

Not For Print Publication

A1 Empirical Distribution of t -statistics

Our sample consists of papers on field experiments published from 2013 to 2015 in a set of ten general-interest economics journals: *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *American Economic Review*, *Econometrica*, *Economic Journal*, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Review of Economic Studies*, and *Review of Economics and Statistics*. We defined a paper as involving field experiments if it mentioned “field experiment” in its abstract or listed JEL Code C93. These criteria generated a sample of 61 papers. Using this sample we recorded the t -statistic for each paper’s featured result. The median t -statistic was 2.6, the 10th percentile t -statistic was 1.7, and the 90th percentile t -statistic was 7.0. Due to the likelihood of publication bias and p -hacking (Franco et al. 2014), we interpret this distribution as an overestimate of the *ex ante* t -statistic distribution that a researcher should expect when beginning a typical field experiment. Nevertheless, the results imply that most researchers should (at best) expect statistical power that corresponds to mean “effect sizes” (i.e. t -statistics) of 2.0 to 3.0 in our power simulations, and we focus our discussion on effect sizes in this range.

A2 Mathematical Proofs

Let $\bar{y}_{i\mathbf{w}_g} = \mathbf{w}_g' \mathbf{y}_{ig}$ and $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}$ be the coefficient associated with a regression of $\bar{y}_{i\mathbf{w}_g}$ on treatment (represented by Equation (7)). Let all outcomes be standardized to have unit variance and let the elements of \mathbf{w}_g sum to one.

A2.1 Index Power

Lemma 1. Let $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}' = (\beta_{1g} \beta_{2g} \dots \beta_{|\mathcal{H}_g|g})$. For a given \mathbf{w}_g , let $\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g} = \beta_{\mathbf{g}}' \mathbf{w}_g$. A regression of $\bar{y}_{i\mathbf{w}_g}$ on treatment estimates $\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g}$.

Proof: Let $\tilde{\mathbf{T}}$ be a demeaned $N \times 1$ vector of treatment assignments, \mathbf{y} any $N \times 1$ vector of outcomes, and \mathbf{Y}_g the $N \times |\mathcal{H}_g|$ matrix of outcomes in group g . A regression of y on treatment

recovers $\hat{\beta} = (\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1}(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\mathbf{y})$. Thus a regression of $\bar{y}_{i\mathbf{w}_g}$ on treatment yields

$$\begin{aligned} (\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1}(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\bar{\mathbf{y}}_{\mathbf{w}_g}) &= (\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1}(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\mathbf{Y}_g\mathbf{w}_g) \\ &= (\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1}(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\mathbf{Y}_g)\mathbf{w}_g = \hat{\beta}'_{\mathbf{g}}\mathbf{w}_g \end{aligned}$$

For completeness note that $\hat{\beta}_{hg}$ is a consistent estimator of β_{hg} , so the regression coefficient is a consistent estimator of $\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g}$.

Lemma 2. For a given \mathbf{w}_g , let $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}$ be the coefficient associated with a regression of $\bar{y}_{i\mathbf{w}_g}$ on treatment. The variance of $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}$ is $\mathbf{w}'_g\Sigma_g\mathbf{w}_g$, where Σ_g represents the covariance matrix for $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{g}}$.

Proof: From Lemma 1, $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g} = \hat{\beta}'_{\mathbf{g}}\mathbf{w}_g$. Then

$$\mathbf{V}(\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}) = \mathbf{V}(\hat{\beta}'_{\mathbf{g}}\mathbf{w}_g) = \mathbf{w}'_g\mathbf{V}(\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{g}})\mathbf{w}_g = \mathbf{w}'_g\Sigma_g\mathbf{w}_g$$

Proposition 1. Consider an index $\bar{y}_{i\mathbf{w}_g} = \mathbf{w}'_g\mathbf{y}_{ig}$. Let $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}$ be the regression coefficient from estimating Equation (7) and let $\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} = \sqrt{\mathbf{V}(\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g})}$. A one-sided test of $\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g} = 0$ based on $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}}$ with critical value $\Phi^{-1}(1 - \alpha)$ has power $\Phi\left(\frac{\beta_{\mathbf{g}}'\mathbf{w}_g}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}'_g\Sigma_g\mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$.

Proof: Following convention, let $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}$ be distributed $N(\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g}, \mathbf{V}(\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}))$. Applying Lemmas 1 and 2,

$$\begin{aligned} &\mathbb{P}(\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} > \Phi^{-1}(1 - \alpha)) \\ &= \mathbb{P}((\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g} - \beta_{\mathbf{w}_g})/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} > -\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} - \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)) \\ &= \mathbb{P}((\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g} - \hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g})/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} < \beta_{\mathbf{w}_g}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)) \\ &= \Phi(\beta_{\mathbf{w}_g}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)) \\ &= \Phi\left(\frac{\beta_{\mathbf{g}}'\mathbf{w}_g}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}'_g\Sigma_g\mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right). \end{aligned}$$

Corollary 1.1. Consider a flatly-weighted KLK index for family g , $\bar{y}_i = \frac{1}{|\mathcal{H}_g|} \sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}_g} y_{ihg}$. Let $\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}$ be the regression coefficient from a regression of \bar{y}_i on treatment. Suppose $\beta_{hg} = \beta \forall h \in \mathcal{H}_g$. Let $\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}} = \sqrt{\mathbf{V}(\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}})}$ and $\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{hg}} = \sqrt{\mathbf{V}(\hat{\beta}_{hg})}$. A test of $\beta > 0$ based on $\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}}$ with critical value $\Phi^{-1}(1 - \alpha)$ is weakly more powerful than a test of $\beta > 0$ based on $\hat{\beta}_{hg}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{hg}}$ with the same critical value.

Proof: Following convention, let $\hat{\beta}_{hg}$ be distributed $N(\beta, \sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{hg}}^2)$. Note that $\bar{y}_i = \frac{1}{|\mathcal{H}_g|} \sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}_g} y_{ihg}$, so \mathbf{w}_g for the KLK index is $\frac{1}{|\mathcal{H}_g|}$. Applying Proposition 1, the test based on $\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}}$ has power $\Phi\left(\frac{\beta_{\mathbf{g}}'\mathbf{1}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{1}'\Sigma_g\mathbf{1}}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$.

$\Phi^{-1}(\alpha)$). In the special case in which \mathbf{w}_g contains a single non-zero element the test has power $\Phi\left(\frac{\beta_{hg}}{\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{hg}}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right) \forall h \in \mathcal{H}_g$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}
& \mathbb{P}(\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}} > \Phi^{-1}(1 - \alpha)) \\
&= \Phi\left(\frac{\beta_{\mathbf{g}'\mathbf{1}}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{1}'\Sigma_g\mathbf{1}}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right) \\
&= \Phi\left(\frac{|\mathcal{H}_g|\beta}{\sqrt{\mathbf{1}'\Sigma_g\mathbf{1}}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right) \\
&\geq \Phi\left(\frac{|\mathcal{H}_g|\beta}{\sqrt{|\mathcal{H}_g|^2\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{hg}}^2}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right) \\
&= \Phi\left(\frac{\beta_{hg}}{\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{hg}}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right) \\
&= \mathbb{P}(\hat{\beta}_{hg}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{hg}} > \Phi^{-1}(1 - \alpha)).
\end{aligned}$$

Corollary 1.2. Consider a KLK index for family g , $\bar{y}_i = \frac{1}{|\mathcal{H}_g|} \sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}_g} y_{ihg}$, and an alternative index $\mathbf{w}'_g \mathbf{y}_{ig}$ with $\mathbf{w}_g \not\propto \mathbf{1}$. Suppose $\beta_{hg} = \beta \forall h \in \mathcal{H}_g$ and $\Sigma_g = \sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{hg}}^2 [(1-\rho) \cdot I + \rho \cdot \mathbf{1}\mathbf{1}']$ for $-1 \leq \rho \leq 1$. Let $\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}} = \sqrt{V(\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}})}$ and $\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}} = \sqrt{V(\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g})}$. A test of $\beta > 0$ based on $\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\bar{y}}}$ with critical value $\Phi^{-1}(1 - \alpha)$ is weakly more powerful than a test of $\beta > 0$ based on $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}}$ with the same critical value.

Proof: Applying Proposition 1, a test based on $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}/\sigma_{\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{w}_g}}$ has power $\Phi\left(\frac{\beta_{\mathbf{g}'\mathbf{w}_g}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}'_g \Sigma_g \mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$. But $\beta_{\mathbf{g}'\mathbf{w}_g} = \beta$ since $\mathbf{w}'_g \mathbf{1} = 1$, so maximizing power is equivalent to minimizing $a(\mathbf{w}_g) = \mathbf{w}'_g \Sigma_g \mathbf{w}_g$. The gradient of $a(\mathbf{w}_g)$ is $2\Sigma_g \mathbf{w}_g$ and the Hessian is $2\Sigma_g$; thus $\partial a / \partial w_{hg} = 2(w_{hg} + \rho \sum_{j \neq h} w_{jg}) \forall h \in \mathcal{H}_g$. The optimal weights are therefore identical across hypotheses, with $\mathbf{w}_g^* = \mathbf{1}/|\mathcal{H}_g|$ given the constraint that weights sum to one. These optimal weights yield the KLK index \bar{y}_i .

A2.2 Full Sample and K -fold Optimus Results

Consider a “full sample” optimus test that does not use cross-validation. We start with a group-level stacked version of the statistical model in Equation (1)

$$\mathbf{y}_{ig} = \beta_{\mathbf{g}} T_i + \varepsilon_{ig} \quad (11)$$

with \mathbf{y}_{ig} , $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$, and T_i as defined previously, and ε_{ig} as an i.i.d. (across i) $|\mathcal{H}_g| \times 1$ column vector containing errors for all hypotheses $h \in \mathcal{H}_g$. After estimating Equation (11) we identify the vector

of weights ω_g that solves

$$\omega_g = \operatorname{argmax}_{\mathbf{w}_g} \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\beta}'_{\mathbf{g}} \mathbf{w}_g}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}_g \hat{\Sigma}_g \mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$$

Proposition 2. Let $\omega_g = \operatorname{argmax}_{\mathbf{w}_g} \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\beta}'_{\mathbf{g}} \mathbf{w}_g}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}_g \hat{\Sigma}_g \mathbf{w}_g}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$, where $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{g}}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ are sample estimates of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ and Σ_g . Let $\beta_{\omega_g} = E[\beta_{\mathbf{g}}' \omega_g \mid \omega_g]$. Consider an index $\bar{y}_{i\omega_g} = \omega'_g \mathbf{y}_{ig}$. A regression of $\bar{y}_{i\omega_g}$ on T_i yields a biased estimate of β_{ω_g} .

Proof: The use of the sample estimators $\hat{\beta}_{\mathbf{g}}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ implies that ω_g is a function of T_i and $\varepsilon_{ig} \forall i$. In particular, the solution maximizes a generally increasing function of $\hat{\beta}'_{\mathbf{g}} \mathbf{w}_g = (\beta_{\mathbf{g}}' + (\mathbf{T}'\mathbf{T})^{-1} \mathbf{T}' \varepsilon_g) \mathbf{w}_g = \beta_{\mathbf{w}_g} + (\mathbf{T}'\mathbf{T})^{-1} \mathbf{T}' \varepsilon_g \mathbf{w}_g$, where ε_g is a $N \times H$ matrix containing $\varepsilon_{ig} \forall i$. To highlight this dependency we write $\omega_g(\mathbf{T}, \varepsilon_g)$. In the regression

$$\bar{y}_{i\omega_g} = \beta_{\omega_g} T_i + \omega_g(\mathbf{T}, \varepsilon_g)' \varepsilon_{ig}$$

it is therefore generally the case that

$$E[\omega_g(\mathbf{T}, \varepsilon_g)' \varepsilon_{ig} \mid T_i] \neq 0$$

Developing the optimus test using the full sample thus generates a biased estimator of β_{ω_g} , even when defining the target parameter to be conditional on the estimated optimus weights.

Proposition 3. Randomly assign N observations to K folds. For each fold k , compute weights $\omega_{-k,g} = \operatorname{argmax}_{\mathbf{w}_{-k,g}} \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\beta}'_{-\mathbf{k},\mathbf{g}} \mathbf{w}_{-k,g}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}_{-k,g} \hat{\Sigma}_{-k,g} \mathbf{w}_{-k,g}}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$, where $\hat{\beta}_{-\mathbf{k},\mathbf{g}}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_{-k,g}$ are estimates of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ and Σ_g using all observations not in fold k . Let $\tilde{\mathbf{T}}$ be a demeaned $N \times 1$ vector of treatment assignments and $\tilde{\mathbf{Y}}_g$ be a $N \times 1$ vector of weighted outcomes, with element i equal to $\omega'_{-k,g} \mathbf{y}_{ig}$. The K -fold optimus estimator $(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}' \tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1} \tilde{\mathbf{T}}' \tilde{\mathbf{Y}}_g$ is unbiased for $E[\beta_{\mathbf{g}}' \omega_{-k,g}]$.

Proof: Let p represent the proportion of treated observations ($T_i = 1$); thus $\sum_i (T_i - \bar{T})^2 = Np(1-p)$. Randomly assign N observations to K folds, stratifying folds on treatment T_i . Without loss of generality, assume the fold index k weakly increases with i ; we may write k_i to refer to the fold containing observation i . For each fold k , the optimus is derived from the other $K - 1$ folds, with weights given by

$$\omega_{-k,g} = \operatorname{argmax}_{\mathbf{w}_{-k,g}} \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\beta}'_{-k,g} \mathbf{w}_{-k,g}}{\sqrt{\mathbf{w}_{-k,g} \hat{\Sigma}_{-k,g} \mathbf{w}_{-k,g}}} + \Phi^{-1}(\alpha)\right)$$

where $\hat{\beta}_{-k,\mathbf{g}}$ and $\hat{\Sigma}_{-k,g}$ are estimates of $\beta_{\mathbf{g}}$ and Σ_g computed using all observations not in fold k . Let $\tilde{\mathbf{T}}$ be a demeaned $N \times 1$ vector of treatment assignments and let

$$\tilde{\mathbf{Y}}_g = \begin{bmatrix} \omega'_{-1,g} \mathbf{Y}_{1g} \\ \omega'_{-1,g} \mathbf{Y}_{2g} \\ \dots \\ \omega'_{-K,g} \mathbf{Y}_{Ng} \end{bmatrix}$$

The K -fold optimus estimator is $(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1}\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{Y}}_g$. To show unbiasedness first note that $E[\tilde{T}_i^2 \omega'_{-k_i,g} \beta_{\mathbf{g}}] = E[\tilde{T}_i^2]E[\omega'_{-k_i,g} \beta_{\mathbf{g}}]$ and $E[\tilde{T}_i \omega'_{-k_i,g} \varepsilon_{ig}] = 0$ because $\omega_{-k_i,g}$ is a function of \mathbf{T}_{-k_i} and $\varepsilon_{-k_i,g}$ (i.e. data from folds not containing i), and $\varepsilon_{ig}, \varepsilon_{jg}, T_i$, and T_j are jointly independent $\forall i, j \ni i \neq j$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} & E[(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1}\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{Y}}_g] \\ &= E\left[\frac{\sum_i \tilde{T}_i \omega'_{-k_i,g} \mathbf{Y}_{ig}}{\sum_i \tilde{T}_i^2}\right] \\ &= E\left[\frac{\sum_i \tilde{T}_i \omega'_{-k_i,g} (\beta_{\mathbf{g}} T_i + \varepsilon_{ig})}{Np(1-p)}\right] \\ &= \frac{\sum_i E[\tilde{T}_i^2 \omega'_{-k_i,g} \beta_{\mathbf{g}}]}{Np(1-p)} + \frac{\sum_i E[\tilde{T}_i \omega'_{-k_i,g} \varepsilon_{ig}]}{Np(1-p)} \\ &= \frac{\sum_i E[\tilde{T}_i^2] E[\omega'_{-k_i,g} \beta_{\mathbf{g}}]}{Np(1-p)} \\ &= \frac{p(1-p) \sum_i E[\omega'_{-k_i,g} \beta_{\mathbf{g}}]}{Np(1-p)} \\ &= E[\omega'_{-k_i,g} \beta_{\mathbf{g}}] \end{aligned}$$

Corollary 3.1. *The OLS standard error for the K -fold optimus estimator $(\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{T}})^{-1}\tilde{\mathbf{T}}'\tilde{\mathbf{Y}}_g$ is generally a biased estimate of the true standard error.*

Proof: Let $\varepsilon_g^\omega = [\omega'_{-1,g} \varepsilon_{1g}, \omega'_{-1,g} \varepsilon_{2g}, \dots, \omega'_{-K,g} \varepsilon_{Ng}]'$. The OLS standard error for the K -fold optimus estimator relies on the assumption $E[\varepsilon_g^\omega \varepsilon_g^{\omega'}] = \sigma^2 I$. But $E[\omega'_{-k_i,g} \varepsilon_{ig} \cdot \omega'_{-k_j,g} \varepsilon_{jg}] \neq 0$, even when $i \neq j$, because $\omega_{-k_i,g}$ is a function of $\varepsilon_{-k_i,g}$, which generally includes ε_{jg} .

A3 Shrinkage Estimator

In general the researcher does not know the covariance matrix for the outcomes, Σ_g , and must estimate it. While the sample covariance matrix $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ is consistent for Σ_g , in any finite sample the

off-diagonal elements suffer from a regression-to-the-mean problem: Large covariance values in the estimated matrix tend to be large both because the true σ_{jk} (the covariance between outcomes j and k) is non-zero and because there has been a stochastic shock in the sample correlation that is in the same direction as σ_{jk} . Using the raw estimate $\hat{\Sigma}_g$ thus tends to over (under) allocate weight to outcomes with abnormally high negative (positive) covariance entries. This suggests applying a shrinkage estimator to the off-diagonal elements of the estimated covariance matrix.³⁰

The shrinkage estimator we consider is the Empirical Bayes estimator. This estimator applies Bayes Theorem:

$$\mathbb{P}(\sigma_{jk}|\hat{\sigma}_{jk}) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(\hat{\sigma}_{jk}|\sigma_{jk}) \cdot \mathbb{P}(\sigma_{jk})}{\mathbb{P}(\hat{\sigma}_{jk})}$$

Using the empirical distribution of the covariance entries for group g and applying the law of iterated expectations we estimate:

$$\mathbb{P}(\sigma_{jk}|\hat{\sigma}_{jk}) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(\hat{\sigma}_{jk}|\sigma_{jk}) \cdot 2/(H_g^2 - H_g)}{\sum_{l=1}^{H_g} \sum_{m=l+1}^{H_g} \mathbb{P}(\hat{\sigma}_{jk}|\sigma_{jk} = \hat{\sigma}_{lm}) \cdot 2/(H_g^2 - H_g)} \quad (12)$$

In this context H_g represents the number of outcomes in group g . Note that we only evaluate $\mathbb{P}(\sigma_{jk}|\hat{\sigma}_{jk})$ for values of σ_{jk} corresponding to points of support in the empirical distribution of $\hat{\sigma}_{jk}$, and the denominator is a constant that ensures the posterior probabilities sum to one.³¹ To understand the estimator's operation, consider the largest $\hat{\sigma}_{jk}$, $\hat{\sigma}_{max}$. The posterior for σ_{max} is centered below $\hat{\sigma}_{max}$ because $\hat{\sigma}_{max}$ is the upper bound of the support for any posterior. Other coefficient estimates $\hat{\sigma}_{lm}$ “pull down” $\mathbb{E}[\sigma_{max}]$, with each posterior point of support $\hat{\sigma}_{lm}$ receiving weight $\mathbb{P}(\hat{\sigma}_{max}|\sigma_{max} = \hat{\sigma}_{lm})$. Thus the estimator “shrinks” larger covariance entries towards the empirical mean of the covariance entries. In practice we find that there tends to be too much shrinkage; for our final estimate of σ_{jk} we use the (unweighted) average the Empirical Bayes estimate of σ_{jk} (Equation (12)) and the raw estimate $\hat{\sigma}_{jk}$.

A4 Analyses of Plans Incorporating Index Tests

This appendix analyzes the relative power of a rich variety of plans that combine index tests with exhaustive PAPs. First we establish that parallel test plans that include an index generally dominate equivalent plans that lack an index, as long as rejecting the index is of nontrivial value. Table A2 reports average power for a plan that tests an index, in parallel with other hypotheses, relative to the same plan without an index test. Panel A compares a PAP with an optimum index to the same PAP

³⁰Note that the diagonal elements are all of similar magnitude due to the standardization of the outcomes.

³¹To compute $\mathbb{P}(\hat{\sigma}_{jk}|\sigma_{jk})$ we appeal to the Central Limit Theorem and assume an approximately normal distribution for $\hat{\sigma}_{jk}$.

without an optimus index, and Panel B compares a PAP with a KLK index to the same PAP without a KLK index. Due to the optimus index's power, plans with optimus indices are superior to their equivalents without indices even when rejecting the index is only half as valuable as rejecting an individual outcome (Panel A). PAPs with KLK indices are generally superior to their equivalents without indices when the index weight is 0.5 (Panel B), but the advantage is not as pronounced as it is with the optimus index (Panel A).

In high-powered cases in which many outcomes reject, rejecting the index along with many of the outcomes comprising the index may be of limited value. Table A3 reproduces Table A2 but applies a double-rejection adjustment so that the researcher does not receive double utility from rejecting an indicator by itself and as part of an index. To achieve this, the correction multiplies the index weight by $1 - a$, where a is the fraction of index hypotheses that individually reject.³² While the value of adding an index as an additional test falls with the double-rejection adjustment, the conclusions in Tables A2 and A3 are qualitatively similar. Thus, as long as researchers place a nontrivial weight on rejecting an index, it is advantageous to include the index test.

Next we analyze the tradeoffs between using an optimus index or a KLK index in a variety of scenarios. Table A4 presents the relative power of an optimus-gated PAP versus KLK index gated PAPs for different index weights. The table reveals how much more valuable the KLK index needs to be than the optimus index before researchers should switch from an optimus to a KLK index. The weight applied to the optimus index varies across rows, while the weight applied to the KLK index varies across columns. Panel A reports results for smaller families (Column (3) of Table A2), while Panel B reports results for larger families (Column (4) of Table A2). A weight of 1.0 implies that a researcher values an index rejection equivalently to rejecting a single outcome.

For small families, if the optimus index has a weight of 1, the KLK index weight needs to exceed 4 before a researcher is indifferent between using the KLK index or an optimus index.³³ For large families, if the optimus index has a weight of 1, the researcher prefers it to the KLK index even when she receives 8 times as much utility from rejecting the KLK index.

Table A5 presents, for different index weights, the relative power of PAPs that test an optimus index in parallel with other hypotheses versus those that test a KLK index in parallel. As above, these tables reveal how much more valuable the KLK index needs to be than the optimus index before researchers should switch from an optimus to a KLK index. Panel A reports results for smaller

³²Since a will typically be much higher for the optimus index than the KLK index, the correction disproportionately affects the optimus.

³³It is tempting to assume that the indifference point for an optimus weight of 2 should be a KLK index weight of 8. This logic ignores the dual role that the indices play, however — they generate rejections themselves, and they gate the testing of individual outcomes. Thus the power ratio of the two plans is not constant in the ratio of the two weights.

families (Column (3) of Table A2), while Panel B reports results for larger families (Column (4) of Table A2). For small families, if the optimus index has a weight of 1, the KLK index weight needs to exceed 5 before a researcher is indifferent between using the KLK index or an optimus index. For large families, if the optimus index has a weight of 1, the researcher prefers it to the KLK index even when she receives 6 times as much utility from rejecting the KLK index.

A5 Application Details: The Oregon Health Insurance Experiment

Finkelstein et al. (2012) examine the effects of a 2008 health insurance lottery in Oregon on health care utilization, financial well-being, and self-reported health outcomes. In 2008 Oregon identified sufficient financial support to expand access to “OHP Standard” — a Medicaid-expansion offering — to an additional 10,000 potential beneficiaries. To identify these beneficiaries, the state proposed to allocate the plan by lottery among the 89,824 applicants who registered from eligible households. The state selected 35,169 potential beneficiaries by lottery, of whom 30% successfully enrolled in Medicaid. In comparing the randomly-selected beneficiaries to those who were not selected, Finkelstein et al. (2012) combine rich administrative and survey data to provide causal evidence on the effects of health insurance on health care utilization and financial and health outcomes.

Finkelstein et al. (2012) follow a prespecified analysis plan. The PAP estimates the equation

$$y_{ihj} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{lottery}_h + X_{ih} \beta_2 + \varepsilon_{ihj} \quad (13)$$

where y_{ihj} represents outcome j for individual i in household h , lottery_h indicates that household h was a lottery winner, and X_{ih} are covariates that determine the probability of winning the health-insurance lottery (household size and survey-round fixed effects).³⁴ Finkelstein et al. (2012) report several key findings. First, access to health insurance boosted health-service utilization. Using both administrative and survey data, lottery winners had more inpatient stays and outpatient visits and were more likely to receive prescription drugs. They also engaged in more preventative care, undergoing more cholesterol tests, high blood sugar tests, mammograms, and Pap smears. Consistent with their utilization, they reported better access to health care: they were more likely to have a usual clinic, a personal doctor, and to report receiving all needed medical care and prescription

³⁴Specifications using administrative data also include covariates to improve precision. The administrative data, however, are not publicly available.

drugs. Finally, access to health care had a positive impact on perceived health: lottery winners reported being in better health, both physically and mentally.³⁵

The OHIE study, with a sample size in the tens of thousands, had more than adequate statistical power — many t -statistics for individual indicators are on the order of 5 to 10. We thus treat OHIE as an opportunity to test the performance of our techniques in a context in which we know the “true” DGP. Specifically, we sample a small fraction of the OHIE data and compare the power of an optimus-gated analysis plan to plans gated by a KLK index or the F or LMS omnibus tests and to an exhaustive PAP that tests all outcomes in parallel (with no gate). We then verify that the conclusions are consistent with the true DGP.

Figure A2 summarizes the structure of the OHIE analysis plan. As with GBF, a logical gating meta-hypothesis is the existence of a first-stage effect — absent any effect on insurance status, it is implausible that the lottery affected other outcomes. Assuming there is a first-stage effect, we can then test whether any of the outcomes, including those related to utilization, financial strain, and self-reported health, were affected. Finally, conditional on insurance having some effect, we can test individual indicators to determine which were affected. We implement the optimus approach using the same 5-fold CV algorithm described in Section 4.1.³⁶

For each targeted sample size we draw 100 random samples, executing the analysis 100 times. We consider samples that are 8%, 10%, 12%, and 15% of the original sample. At each sample size we ask what power an exhaustive PAP, a gated KLK index approach, a gated optimus approach, or the F or LMS omnibus tests would have. We focus on the survey data outcomes, as nearly all of the administrative data outcomes are not publicly available. For simplicity we estimate intention-to-treat (ITT) effects.³⁷ We populate the family of outcomes using all measures listed in the original PAP that could plausibly respond to treatment. The outcomes fall into three broad categories: care-seeking behaviors, including outcomes related to health care utilization, preventative health care,

³⁵Interestingly, Finkelstein et al. (2012) point out that a number of patterns suggest that this improvement in health is not likely directly attributable to health service utilization, as these changes appear in survey data well before any differences in health service utilization emerge.

³⁶There are two subtle divergences from the GBF-analysis procedure. First, since we are not generating substantive results for OHIE, we assume that the researcher could preregister the CV folds for the analysis, removing the need to generate many sets of folds and apply the conservative Chernozukhov et al. (2018) bound for the median p -value. Second, since OHIE treatment is only random conditional on covariates, we stratify the null treatment permutations on covariates as well (i.e. we ensure that the average treatment probability in each covariate cell, after permutation, matches the original treatment probability in that cell). This stratification is critical for generating tests of the correct size.

³⁷Instrumental variables estimates are approximately 3.5 times the ITT estimates; as documented in Section A5.1 the first-stage estimation error is trivial.

and health care access; self-reported health outcomes; and financial outcomes. To ensure that our conclusions comparing different approaches are not specific to the pooling of all outcomes into a single family, we also explore the power of the optimus index and KLK index when applied separately to each of the three subfamilies.³⁸ Table A9 lists the indicators used across all three subfamilies, alongside measurements of the ITT effects and FWER-adjusted p -values from the full (100%) sample.³⁹ The table reveals that at least nine (of the 44) individual indicators reject in the 100% sample, even when controlling FWER across all 44 tests, with at least one rejection in each of the three subfamilies.

A5.1 OHIE Results

Table A10 reports average rejection rates for different families (rows) across different analysis plans (columns). We focus on the 10% sample because it represents a scenario in which power approaches, but does not reach, the 80% rule-of-thumb target. Table A12 presents analogous results for the 8%, 12%, and 15% samples. The first-stage test for an effect on Medicaid coverage is identical across all analysis plans. The lottery strongly increased Medicaid coverage in the original study ($F = 1, 930$), and the first-stage rejects with 100% frequency in every sample.

Since all approaches reject the first stage, we then consider whether each approach finds that OHIE impacted one or more of the 44 plausible outcomes. Column (1) reports the power to reject this hypothesis for each approach. The optimus approach (correctly) concludes that OHIE affected outcomes 71% of the time. This represents 22% higher power than the (unweighted) KLK index, which rejects the null 58% of the time. The F omnibus tests rejects 73% of the time, while the LMS omnibus test rejects 38% of the time, suggesting that its additional flexibility is not helpful in this context. Finally, an exhaustive PAP that tests 44 indicators in parallel rejects one or more indicators 58% of the time, with a median rejection of one indicator (conditional on rejecting anything).

Column (2) of Table A10 reports average effect sizes where relevant. As expected, the average

³⁸We note that these families are somewhat different from the indices reported in Finkelstein et al. (2012), who report standardized effects at the sub-table level, often consisting of only two or three indicators. We adopt the larger families to focus on highlighting statistical properties at much smaller subsamples, where aggregating over more indicators would be attractive for statistical power. Nevertheless, we also report results for several small, homogeneous table-level families defined in the OHIE PAP that formed the basis of Finkelstein et al. (2012).

³⁹Our goal with the OHIE data is to compare the performance of different analytic strategies rather than to establish novel substantive results. Thus we limit the 100% sample to individuals with complete data for the outcome indicators we identify ($N = 8, 141$), rather than imputing data for missing outcomes. We take the 100% sample as the “true” effects in the sense that they represent the estimands for estimates based on random subsamples of the data. These estimates may not be unbiased for the true ITT effects, however, if OHIE outcome data are not missing at random.

effect size for the optimus index, 0.09 standard deviations, is larger than the KLK index average index effect size of 0.04 standard deviations. The gap between the two effect sizes is less pronounced than in GoBiFo, reflecting the smaller family size and more modest effect heterogeneity in OHIE. The gap between the two estimates is also smaller than what we would expect if the treatment effects on all indicators excluded by the optimus were zero, suggesting that in this context the optimus chooses indicators with larger effect sizes rather than all indicators with nonzero effects.

On average, the optimus procedure constructs an index that is a weighted average of 9.0 indicator variables (Column (3)), six of which receive an average weight greater than 4%, and none of which receive an average weight above 20%.⁴⁰ Table A11 reports the variables appearing most frequently in the optimus and their associated average weights. Outcomes that stand out include indicators for (not) paying any out-of-pocket medical costs in the past six months, reporting the usual place of care is a clinic, having any primary care visits, and getting all needed medical care in the past six months.

Column (4) of Table A10 reports the “true” optimus and KLK index effect sizes, based on the 100% sample. To compute these estimates we apply the average optimus index weights to generate a weighted index in the 100% OHIE sample and then estimate Equation (13) in the 100% sample using this weighted index as the outcome.⁴¹ We do the same for the KLK index but use identical weights for each indicator variable. The estimates in Columns (4) confirm that both procedures estimate the correct effect sizes on average, and the modest differences in estimates between Columns (2) and (4) are not statistically significant.

Table A10 also reports “effect sizes” and “index size” for an exhaustive PAP. The average PAP “effect size”, reported in Column (2), corresponds to the average effect size for indicators that reject with the exhaustive PAP; when no indicator rejects (which occurs 42% of the time), the calculation includes the effect size for the most significant indicator. The average effect size for a PAP-rejected indicator is 0.21 standard deviations — more than double the optimus effect size and five times the overall average effect size. The average PAP “index size”, or number of rejected indicators, is 1.3.⁴² Finally, Column (4) reports the “true” average effect size (estimated on the 100% sample) for the indicators that reject in the exhaustive PAP. The average true effect

⁴⁰We count an indicator as appearing in the index if it receives at least as much weight as it would in a KLK index; in this case that corresponds to a weight of $0.023 = \frac{1}{44}$.

⁴¹Let r index 10% sample draws ($R = 100$), h index indicator variables ($H = 44$), and w_{hr} be the optimus weight for indicator h in sample draw r . The average optimus weight for indicator variable h , applied to construct the “true” optimus index in the 100% sample, is: $\sum_{r=1}^R w_{hr} / \sum_{h=1}^H \sum_{r=1}^R w_{hr}$.

⁴²To make the PAP result more comparable to the optimus and KLK index size figures, which are averaged across all 100 random samples, we left-censor the PAP “index size” at 1 in the 42% of random samples that reject nothing. If we set the PAP “index size” to 0 when nothing rejects, the average PAP “index size” is 0.9.

size for these indicators is 0.13 standard deviations, or 38% less than the estimated average effect size. The discrepancy between the estimated effect size and the true effect size arises because the exhaustive PAP is underpowered and selects the most significant indicators for rejection, inflating the effect sizes (Czibor et al., 2019).⁴³ More generally, the PAP results in Table A10 highlight the difficulty in estimating and interpreting effect sizes with a PAP that tests many outcome variables: few indicators may be significant; those that are significant may feature large (true) effect sizes; and estimated effect sizes may be inflated without additional bias corrections (Andrews et al., 2021).

The analysis plan in Figure A2 specifies the optimus as a gate for the 44 indicator hypotheses — this is equivalent to executing an exhaustive PAP if and only if the optimus index rejects. The bottom row in Table A10 reports the average PAP power and “index size” when the optimus gates the PAP. In addition to rejecting the optimus index 71% of the time, the gated PAP rejects one or more indicators 51% of the time, which is only 7 percentage points lower than the ungated exhaustive PAP. Furthermore, the average number of rejections (conditional on rejecting anything) is virtually identical for the gated and ungated PAPs. In summary, adding an optimus gate to the exhaustive PAP comes at little cost — in 88% of cases in which the ungated exhaustive PAP would detect an effect on any individual outcome, the gated exhaustive PAP would also detect an effect on the same outcomes.

Table A12 reports the main results in Table A10 for the 8%, 12%, and 15% samples. Across all four sample sizes (8%, 10%, 12%, and 15%) the results are qualitatively similar: the optimus test has the highest power, followed by the KLK index or F omnibus test, the exhaustive PAP, and finally the LMS omnibus test. Power for all tests increases with sample size, and the optimus’s average effect size and index size increase modestly with sample size, suggesting that larger samples allow the optimus to more precisely select variables for inclusion.

We also leverage the full dataset (i.e. 100% sample) to examine the frequency at which the optimus index includes indicators for which there is (approximately) a null effect. To determine this frequency, we first enumerate the outcomes that reject in the full dataset when controlling the false discovery rate at $q < 0.1$ (Benjamini et al., 2006); we find that there are 19 outcomes for which there is compelling evidence of a treatment effect. We then compute the average optimus weight assigned to each outcome across the 100 random 10% samples. We find that on average 81% of the weight in the optimus index gets assigned to variables for which there is strong evidence of a treatment effect in the full dataset. Only seven outcomes for which there is weak evidence of a treatment effect receive more than 1% average weight, with the most frequent “null” outcome

⁴³Ironically, since the multiplicity-adjusted significance threshold is more stringent than the conventional significance threshold, the inflation bias can be even more extreme with an exhaustive PAP than the typical case of publication bias.

(currently taking prescription medications) receiving 2.3% weight on average.⁴⁴ Thus, in expectation a supermajority of the optimus weight goes to outcomes with treatment effects, implying that in this case the optimus selects a broad index of variables that are generally affected by treatment. By comparison, the KLK index places 57% (25/44) of its weight on outcomes for which there is not strong evidence of a treatment effect.

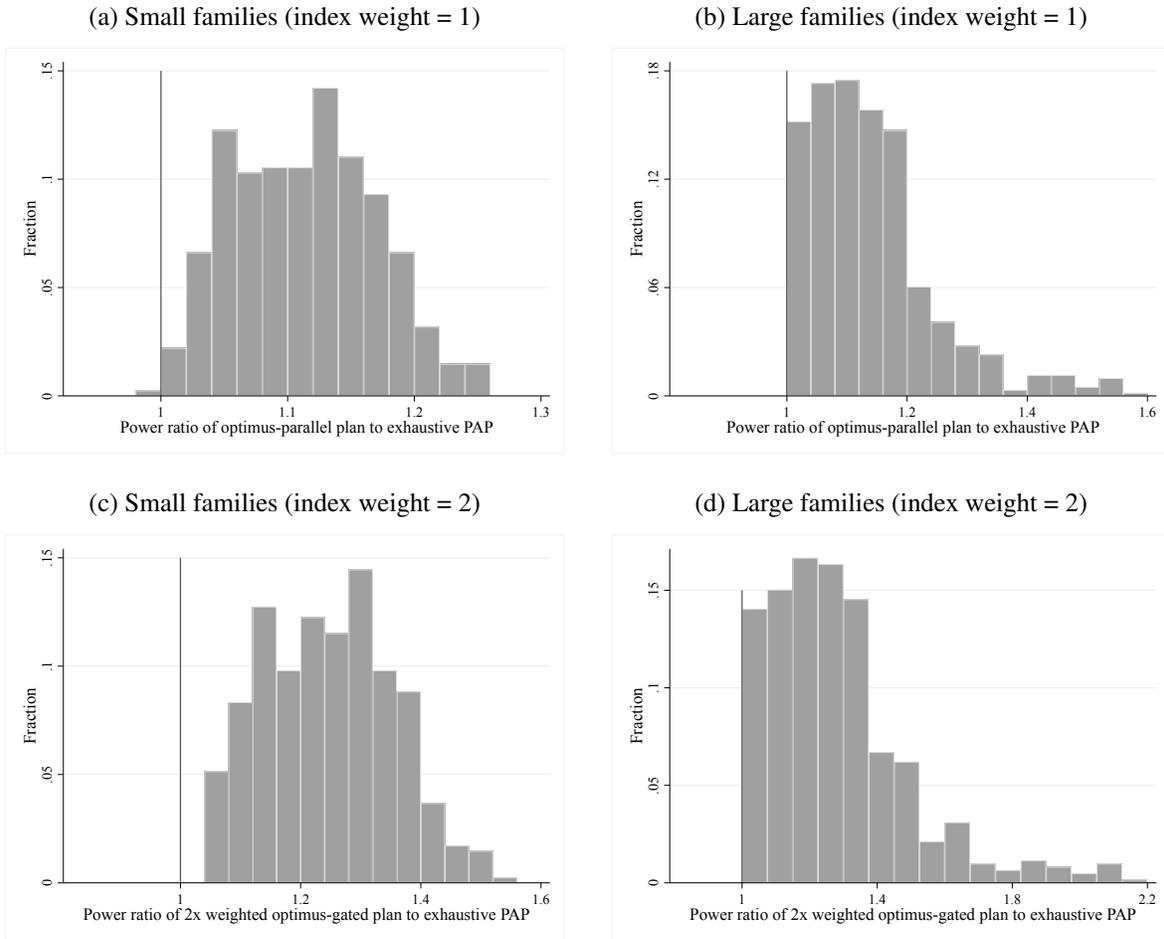
Finally, we compare the performance of the optimus index and the KLK index when testing the three OHIE subfamily hypotheses: utilization-related outcomes, health-related outcomes, and financial outcomes. These estimates allow us to examine the performance of the different index tests in smaller families of hypotheses. Instead of testing a single all-outcome gate, we now test three subfamily indices in parallel. Table A13 reports average power, effect size, and index size for these three subfamilies using the 10% sample.⁴⁵ The tests are underpowered for all three subfamilies, in part because we now multiplicity adjust the p -values to reflect that we test the three subfamilies in parallel. Nevertheless, in each case the optimus outperforms the KLK index and F omnibus test in terms of power. For example, for utilization-related outcomes the optimus achieves 36% power versus 21% power for the KLK index and 30% power for the F omnibus, while for financial-related outcomes the optimus achieves 23% power versus 17% power for the KLK index and 20% power for the F omnibus.⁴⁶

⁴⁴This outcome has an unadjusted p -value of 0.10 and a FDR control q -value of 0.14 in the full dataset, suggesting that its null is more likely false than true.

⁴⁵Table A11 reports the average weights received by each indicator when estimating a separate optimus index for each subfamily.

⁴⁶The KLK index achieves only 2% power for the health-related outcomes. This is effectively the size of the test, since we multiplicity adjust the p -values for three parallel tests using the Romano-Wolf algorithm.

Figure A1: Distribution of Relative Power of Optimus Parallel Plan (with double-rejection adjustment) versus Exhaustive PAP



Notes: Panels (a) and (c) correspond to Column (3) of Table 2, and Panels (b) and (d) correspond to Column (4). The double-rejection adjustment scales an index’s rejection utility by one minus the fraction of index components that reject in the PAP.

Figure A2: Optimus Gate analysis plan for Finkelstein et al. (2012)

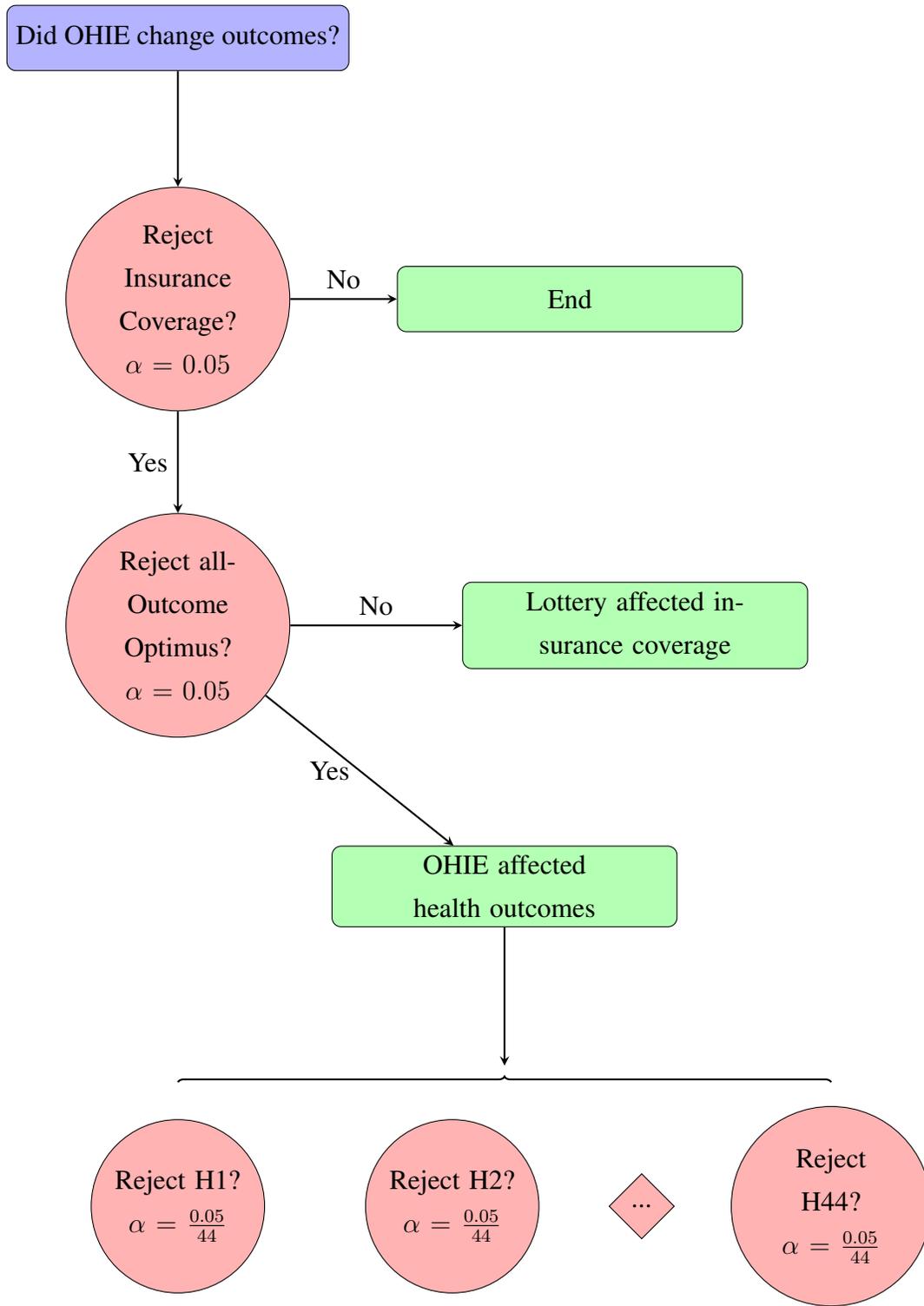


Table A1: Indicators and Weights in GoBiFo Optimus

Hypothesis	Indicator Name	Variable Label	Weight	PAP Family
Hardware	bank_acct	Does this community have a bank account?	0.281	H1,H3
	vdc	Since January 2006, has this community had a Village or Community Development Co	0.118	H1
	vdp	Does this community have a village development plan (i.e. an agreed plan with sp	0.094	H1
	training	In the past 2 years (since October 2007), have you participated in any skills tr	0.09	H3
	func_tba	Does the community have a traditional birth attendant (TBA) house and is it func	0.089	H2
	f_comentr	Does the community have a community center and is it functional?	0.06	H2
	f_barrie	Does the community have a court barrie and is it functional?	0.06	H2
	f_dryflr	Does the community have a drying floor and is it functional?	0.05	H2
	att_wdc	Have you personally talked with a member of the WDC or participated in a meeting	0.043	H1
	seedbank	Does this community have a seed bank (i.e. where people can borrow rice or groun	0.028	H2
	quintile	Quintile of Household PCA Asset/Amenities score	0.026	H3
	petty	[From supervisor tour of community] Have you seen anybody selling packaged goods	0.021	H3
	tarp_public	[After asking the community how they have used (or plan to use) the tarp] SUPERV	0.02	H2
	vis_wdc	Has this community been visited by a Ward Development Committee member in the pa	0.015	H1
	Software	commfarm	Does this community have any communal farms?	0.091
no_fight		In the past 12 months, respondent has not been involved in any physical fighting	0.076	H11
minutes		Did anyone take minutes (written record of what was said) at the most recent com	0.069	H5
list_lc_chf		Relative view of 'do you think the Local Council [as opposed to Paramount chief]	0.065	H6
mbr_wom		Are you a member of any women's groups (general)?	0.062	H8
rtarp_public		[Given current chief chosen since 2005] Is the current (or acting) village chief	0.06	H6
name_elec		Correctly able to name the year of the next general elections	0.055	H9
leader_yth		Respondent agrees with 'Responsible young people can be good leaders' and not 'O	0.054	H6,H12
tstore_notchf		Village focus group says tarp is not stored in chief's private residence	0.039	H6
vote		Enumerator record of whether a vote occurred during the gift choice deliberation	0.039	H5,H6
name_sc		Correctly able to name the Section Chief for this section	0.039	H9
council_listen		Do you think the Local Council listens to what people in this town / neighborhoo	0.037	H10
trust_ngo		In your opinion, do you believe NGOs / donor projects or do you have to be caref	0.035	H7
mbr_seed		Are you a member of any seed multiplication groups?	0.035	H8
maj_gift		Gift (salt versus batteries) chosen reflects the view of the majority of househo	0.03	H5
mbr_trad		Are you a member of any traditional societies?	0.029	H8
say_tarp		Respondent feels that 'everybody in the village had equal say' in deciding what	0.028	H5
store_tarp		Tarp is stored in a public place (community center, school/clinic, church/mosque	0.028	H5
meet_yth		Enumerator record of total youths (18-35 years) present at gift choice meeting (0.026	H5
vis_pc		Has this community been visited by the Paramount Chief in the past year?	0.019	H9
bribebad		Respondent agrees with 'It's wrong to pay a bribe to any government official' an	0.017	H12
vh_fem		Is the current (or acting) village chief/Headman a woman?	0.016	H12
rmarket		Have you ever given money to a nonhousehold member to buy something for you at t	0.014	H7
dues	How much money have your given to church or mosque in the last month? [Add up al	0.013	H8	
disabled_meet	Did any disabled people (blind, polio, amputee, wheelchair, etc.) attend the las	0.012	H5	
notrad_cards	Respondent does not choose a chiefdom official or elder in response to 'who had	0.01	H6	

Hypothesis	Indicator Name	Variable Label	Weight	PAP Family
	no.fight	In the past 12 months, respondent has not been involved in any physical fighting	0.086	H11
	minutes	Did anyone take minutes (written record of what was said) at the most recent com	0.073	H5
	mbr_wom	Are you a member of any women's groups (general)?	0.071	H8
	list_lc.chf	Relative view of 'do you think the Local Council [as opposed to Paramount chief]	0.066	H6
	rtarp_public	[Given current chief chosen since 2005] Is the current (or acting) village chief	0.062	H6
	name_elec	Correctly able to name the year of the next general elections	0.06	H9
	leader_yth	Respondent agrees with 'Responsible young people can be good leaders' and not 'O	0.06	H6,H12
	council_listen	Do you think the Local Council listens to what people in this town / neighborhoo	0.049	H10
	tstore_notchf	Village focus group says tarp is not stored in chief's private residence	0.046	H6
	trust_ngo	In your opinion, do you believe NGOs / donor projects or do you have to be caref	0.041	H7
	mbr_seed	Are you a member of any seed multiplication groups?	0.039	H8
	vote	Enumerator record of whether a vote occurred during the gift choice deliberation	0.039	H5,H6
Software (no community farm)	name_sc	Correctly able to name the Section Chief for this section	0.038	H9
	meet_yth	Enumerator record of total youths (18-35 years) present at gift choice meeting (0.032	H5
	say_tarp	Respondent feels that 'everybody in the village had equal say' in deciding what	0.031	H5
	maj_gift	Gift (salt versus batteries) chosen reflects the view of the majority of househo	0.03	H5
	store_tarp	Tarp is stored in a public place (community center, school/clinic, church/mosque	0.029	H5
	mbr_trad	Are you a member of any traditional societies?	0.026	H8
	vis_pc	Has this community been visited by the Paramount Chief in the past year?	0.021	H9
	bribebad	Respondent agrees with 'It's wrong to pay a bribe to any government official' an	0.019	H12
	vh_fem	Is the current (or acting) village chief/Headman a woman?	0.016	H12
	rmarket	Have you ever given money to a nonhousehold member to buy something for you at t	0.016	H7
	dues	How much money have your given to church or mosque in the last month? [Add up al	0.014	H8
	disabled_meet	Did any disabled people (blind, polio, amputee, wheelchair, etc.) attend the las	0.012	H5
	duration	Enumerator record of duration of gift choice deliberation in minutes (field acti	0.011	H5
	notrad_cards	Respondent does not choose a chieftom official or elder in response to 'who had	0.01	H6
	spend_lc.chf	Relative view of 'if the Local Council [as opposed to Paramount chief] was given	0.01	H6
Hypothesis 1	bank_acct	Does this community have a bank account?	0.5	H1,H3
	vdc	Since January 2006, has this community had a Village or Community Development Co	0.227	H1
	vdp	Does this community have a village development plan (i.e. an agreed plan with sp	0.144	H1
	att_wdc	Have you personally talked with a member of the WDC or participated in a meeting	0.082	H1
	vis_wdc	Has this community been visited by a Ward Development Committee member in the pa	0.05	H1
Hypothesis 2	func_tba	Does the community have a traditional birth attendant (TBA) house and is it func	0.201	H2
	seedbank	Does this community have a seed bank (i.e. where people can borrow rice or groun	0.177	H2
	f_barrie	Does the community have a court barrie and is it functional?	0.172	H2
	f_comentr	Does the community have a community center and is it functional?	0.153	H2
	f_latrine	Does the community have a latrine and is it functional?	0.113	H2
	f_dryflr	Does the community have a drying floor and is it functional?	0.077	H2
	footunif	Do any of the local sports teams have uniforms / vests?	0.046	H2
	tarp_public	[After asking the community how they have used (or plan to use) the tarp] SUPERV	0.03	H2
	func_sports	Does the community have a football / sports field and is it functional?	0.021	H2
	f_psch	Does the community have a primary school and is it functional?	0.021	H2

Hypothesis	Indicator Name	Variable Label	Weight	PAP Family
Hypothesis 3	bank_acct	Does this community have a bank account?	0.6	H1,H3
	training	In the past 2 years (since October 2007), have you participated in any skills tr	0.186	H3
	quintile	Quintile of Household PCA Asset/Amenities score	0.071	H3
	assets	Household PCA Asset/Amenities score (includes hhs ownership of bicycle, mobile p	0.039	H3
	tot_goods	Number of goods out of 10 common items (bread, soap, garri, country cloth/garra	0.036	H3
	petty	[From supervisor tour of community] Have you seen anybody selling packaged goods	0.028	H3
	betteroff	Supervisor assessment that community is 'much better off' or 'a little better of	0.021	H3
	tot_petty	How many houses and small shops (including tables, boxes and kiosks) are selling	0.02	H3
Hypothesis 4	commfarm	Does this community have any communal farms?	0.713	H4
	vchr_tot	How much money do you think the community will be able to raise to use the build	0.13	H4
	mkt_grp	Do any people from different households here come together to sell agricultural	0.054	H4,H7,H8
	cards	Number of vouchers for building materials out of 6 maximum that the community re	0.046	H4
	wkcomfrm	In the past one year, did you work on a communal farm (this means a farm owned b	0.041	H4
Hypothesis 5	minutes	Did anyone take minutes (written record of what was said) at the most recent com	0.014	H5
	say_tarp	Respondent feels that 'everybody in the village had equal say' in deciding what	0.01	H5
	show_tarp	Supervisor asks to see the tarp at second round follow-up visit: can the communi	0.01	H5
Hypothesis 6	rtarp_public	[Given current chief chosen since 2005] Is the current (or acting) village chief	0.218	H6
	list_lc_chf	Relative view of 'do you think the Local Council [as opposed to Paramount chief]	0.177	H6
	leader_yth	Respondent agrees with 'Responsible young people can be good leaders' and not 'O	0.16	H6,H12
	tstore_notchf	Village focus group says tarp is not stored in chief's private residence	0.157	H6
	notrad_tarp	Respondent does not choose a chiefdom official or elder in response to 'who had	0.113	H6
	vote	Enumerator record of whether a vote occurred during the gift choice deliberation	0.091	H5,H6
	notrad_cards	Respondent does not choose a chiefdom official or elder in response to 'who had	0.028	H6
	leader_wmn	Respondent agrees with 'Women can be good politicians and should be encouraged t	0.028	H6,H12
	spend_lc_chf	Relative view of 'if the Local Council [as opposed to Paramount chief] was given	0.017	H6
question_auth	Respondent agrees with 'As citizens, we should be more active in questioning the	0.016	H6	
Hypothesis 7	trust_ngo	In your opinion, do you believe NGOs / donor projects or do you have to be caref	0.471	H7
	rmarket	Have you ever given money to a nonhousehold member to buy something for you at t	0.189	H7
	hmarket	Tomorrow, if you needed to buy something from town or the market but were unable	0.062	H7
	osusu	Are you a member of any credit or savings (osusu) groups?	0.032	H7,H8
	trust_pol	In your opinion, do you believe the police or do you have to be careful when dea	0.025	H7
	trust_own	In your opinion, do you believe people from you own village / town / neighborhoo	0.014	H7
	trust_out	In your opinion, do you believe people from outside you own village / town / nei	0.012	H7

Hypothesis	Indicator Name	Variable Label	Weight	PAP Family
Hypothesis 8	mbr_wom	Are you a member of any women's groups (general)?	0.524	H8
	mbr_seed	Are you a member of any seed multiplication groups?	0.259	H8
	mbr_trad	Are you a member of any traditional societies?	0.118	H8
	dues	How much money have you given to church or mosque in the last month? [Add up all	0.055	H8
	osusu	Are you a member of any credit or savings (osusu) groups?	0.021	H7,H8
Hypothesis 9	name_elec	Correctly able to name the year of the next general elections	0.377	H9
	name_sc	Correctly able to name the Section Chief for this section	0.227	H9
	name_chr	Correctly able to name the Chairperson of the Local Council	0.125	H9
	vis_pc	Has this community been visited by the Paramount Chief in the past year?	0.1	H9
	disp_ind	Supervisor assessment of whether there are any of the following items—awareness	0.034	H9
	radio	Do you get information from the radio about politics and what the government is	0.027	H9
Hypothesis 10	vote_local	Did you vote in the local government election (2008)?	0.206	H10
	stand_lc	Did anyone in this community contest the party symbol in the 2008 local council	0.039	H10
	change_council	Respondent thinks they have 'some' or 'little' as opposed to 'no' chance to chan	0.029	H10
	vote_pres1	Enumerator verifies that respondent's voter ID card has the correct hole punched	0.029	H10
	cvote_local	Enumerator verifies that respondent's voter ID card has the correct hole punched	0.022	H10
Hypothesis 11	no_fight	In the past 12 months, respondent has not been involved in any physical fighting	0.599	H11
	no_conflict	No conflict that respondent needed help from someone outside the household to re	0.23	H11
	nobeatchild	Respondent agrees with 'Beating children will only teach them to use violence ag	0.035	H11
	no_witch	During the last 12 months, respondent has not been a victim of witchcraft (juju)	0.03	H11
	violence_bad	Respondent agrees with 'The use of violence is never justified in politics' and	0.028	H11
	no_theft	In the past 12 months, no livestock, household items or money stolen from the re	0.013	H11
Hypothesis 12	leader_yth	Respondent agrees with 'Responsible young people can be good leaders' and not 'O	0.318	H6,H12
	bribebad	Respondent agrees with 'It's wrong to pay a bribe to any government official' an	0.164	H12
	vh_fem	Is the current (or acting) village chief/Headman a woman?	0.135	H12
	leader_wmn	Respondent agrees with 'Women can be good politicians and should be encouraged t	0.104	H6,H12
	youthreat	Respondent agrees with 'In this community, elders / authorities treat youths jus	0.016	H12

Table A2: Relative Power of Plans w/ Indices v. Plans w/o Indices

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Index weight:</i>	A: Optimus + PAP v. PAP				
0.5	1.10	1.12	1.15	1.11	1.11
1.0	1.20	1.23	1.31	1.21	1.22
1.5	1.29	1.35	1.47	1.32	1.33
2.0	1.38	1.46	1.63	1.42	1.45
	B: KLK index + PAP v. PAP				
0.5	1.04	1.04	1.01	1.02	1.00
1.0	1.09	1.08	1.04	1.04	1.02
1.5	1.13	1.12	1.08	1.06	1.03
2.0	1.17	1.15	1.11	1.08	1.05
<i>Parameter restrictions:</i>					
Total hypotheses (H)			≤ 20	≥ 50	
Share false (H_1/H)		≤ 0.5	≤ 0.2	≤ 0.2	0.1
Average effect size (μ_t)		≤ 3.0	≤ 3.0	≤ 3.0	≤ 2.5
Combinations	2,600	1,560	416	624	390

Notes: Each cell reports, for a given index weight, the geometric mean power ratio of a plan that tests an index in parallel with other hypotheses to an equivalent plan that omits the index test. Panels A and B respectively test an optimus index with an exhaustive PAP and a KLK index with an exhaustive PAP.

Table A3: Relative Power of Plans w/ Indices v. Plans w/o Indices, Double-rejection Adjusted

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Index weight:</i>	A: Optimus + PAP v. PAP				
0.5	1.04	1.06	1.05	1.07	1.05
1.0	1.09	1.12	1.11	1.14	1.12
1.5	1.14	1.18	1.18	1.21	1.18
2.0	1.18	1.24	1.24	1.27	1.24
	B: KLK index + PAP v. PAP				
0.5	1.03	1.03	1.01	1.02	1.00
1.0	1.07	1.07	1.04	1.04	1.02
1.5	1.11	1.10	1.06	1.06	1.03
2.0	1.14	1.14	1.09	1.07	1.04
<i>Parameter restrictions:</i>					
Total hypotheses (H)			≤ 20	≥ 50	
Share false (H_1/H)		≤ 0.5	≤ 0.2	≤ 0.2	0.1
Average effect size (μ_t)		≤ 3.0	≤ 3.0	≤ 3.0	≤ 2.5
Combinations	2,600	1,560	416	624	390

Notes: Each cell reports, for a given index weight, the geometric mean power ratio of a plan that tests an index in parallel with other hypotheses to an equivalent plan that omits the index test. Panels A and B respectively test an optimus index with an exhaustive PAP and a KLK index with an exhaustive PAP. The double-rejection adjustment scales an index's rejection utility by one minus the fraction of index components that reject in the PAP.

Table A4: Relative Power of Optimus-Gated PAP v. KLK Index Gated PAP

<i>KLK index weight:</i>	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0
<i>Optimus-index weight:</i>	<i>A: $H \leq 20$</i>							
1.0	2.41	1.66	1.27	1.03	0.87	0.75	0.66	0.59
2.0	3.54	2.44	1.87	1.52	1.28	1.10	0.97	0.87
3.0	4.67	3.22	2.47	2.00	1.68	1.45	1.28	1.14
4.0	5.79	4.00	3.06	2.48	2.09	1.80	1.59	1.42
	<i>B: $H \geq 50$</i>							
1.0	2.54	2.06	1.74	1.52	1.35	1.21	1.10	1.01
2.0	3.27	2.65	2.24	1.95	1.73	1.56	1.42	1.30
3.0	3.97	3.22	2.72	2.37	2.11	1.89	1.72	1.58
4.0	4.66	3.77	3.20	2.78	2.47	2.22	2.02	1.86

Notes: Each cell reports, for a given combination of optimus-index and KLK index weights, the geometric mean power ratio of an optimus-index gated exhaustive PAP to a KLK index gated exhaustive PAP. Panel A uses the same set of parameter combinations as Column (3) of Table 2, and Panel B uses the same set of parameter combinations as Column (4) of Table 2 (416 and 624 parameter combinations respectively).

Table A5: Relative Power of Optimus-Parallel PAP v. KLK Index Parallel PAP

<i>KLK index weight:</i>	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0
<i>Optimus-index weight:</i>	A: $H \leq 20$							
1.0	1.25	1.18	1.12	1.06	1.01	0.97	0.93	0.89
2.0	1.56	1.47	1.39	1.32	1.26	1.21	1.16	1.11
3.0	1.86	1.75	1.66	1.58	1.50	1.44	1.38	1.32
4.0	2.16	2.03	1.92	1.83	1.74	1.67	1.60	1.54
	B: $H \geq 50$							
1.0	1.17	1.13	1.09	1.06	1.03	1.01	0.98	0.96
2.0	1.37	1.32	1.28	1.24	1.21	1.18	1.15	1.13
3.0	1.56	1.51	1.46	1.42	1.38	1.35	1.32	1.29
4.0	1.76	1.70	1.64	1.60	1.55	1.51	1.48	1.45

Notes: Each cell reports, for a given combination of optimus-index and KLK index weights, the geometric mean power ratio of an exhaustive PAP that tests the optimus index in parallel to an exhaustive PAP that tests the KLK index in parallel. Panel A uses the same set of parameter combinations as Column (3) of Table 2, and Panel B uses the same set of parameter combinations as Column (4) of Table 2 (416 and 624 parameter combinations respectively).

Table A6: OLS results and Optimus Weights, DRC Program Activities

Indicator	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	IYDA		Cash Transfers	
	OLS	Optimus Weight	OLS	Optimus Weight
member of savings group	0.109 (0.076)	0.219	0.08 (0.085)	0.006
participated in trainings	0.119 (0.074)	0.237	0.059 (0.089)	0.009
savings group attendance (freq)	0.196 (0.117)	0.264	0.269 (0.192)	0.123
entrepreneurship training (freq)	0.095 (0.068)	0.009	0.076 (0.086)	0.011
respondent received cash grant	0.255 (0.137)	0.145	2.082 (0.227)	0.42
total cash grants received	0.337 (0.181)	0.127	2.795 (0.318)	0.436

Columns (1) and (3) present OLS estimates and standard errors clustered at the village level from outcome-by-outcome regressions of Equation (10), while Columns (2) and (4) report the estimated optimus weights from that specification. Columns (1) and (2) focus on the estimates and weights associated with IYDA while Columns (3) and (4) focus on the estimates and weights associated with cash transfers.

Table A7: OLS results and Optimus Weights, DRC Resilience Capacities

Indicator	Hypothesis	IYDA		Cash Transfers			
		(1) OLS	(2) Family Weights	(3) OLS	(4) Family Weights	(5) H4 Weights	(6) H5 Weights
bonding social capital (who can help)	4	-0.073 (0.101)	0	0.164 (0.116)	0	0	
bonding social capital (who would help)	4	-0.075 (0.092)	0	0.202 (0.102)	0	0	
resp participates in HH savings dec	4	0.1 (0.082)	0	-0.232 (0.088)	0.274	0.633	
resp participates in HH spending dec	4	0.026 (0.081)	0	-0.156 (0.088)	0.044	0.158	
resp participates in HH gift dec	4	0.05 (0.072)	0	-0.174 (0.079)	0.026	0.217	
resp participates in spending (own money)	4	-0.09 (0.075)	0	-0.026 (0.103)	0	0.001	
locus of control	5	0.011 (0.082)	0	-0.23 (0.086)	0.344		0.468
aspirations (childrens future)	5	0.081 (0.074)	0	-0.163 (0.069)	0.201		0.358
aspirations (childrens ed)	5	0.038 (0.062)	0	-0.066 (0.062)	0		0
group you will help	5	-0.059 (0.090)	0	0.095 (0.096)	0		0
groups that will help you	5	-0.053 (0.083)	0	0.048 (0.091)	0		0
knows gov official	5	-0.037 (0.073)	0	-0.031 (0.074)	0.036		0.056
can ask gov official for help	5	-0.071 (0.060)	0	-0.029 (0.053)	0		0
knows NGO staff	5	-0.108 (0.057)	0	0.031 (0.050)	0		0
can ask NGO staff for help	5	-0.077 (0.065)	0	0.058 (0.059)	0		0
community group member	5	-0.007 (0.080)	0	0.027 (0.085)	0		0

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DRC Resilience Outcomes, continued							
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		IYDA		Cash Transfers			
Indicator	Hypothesis	OLS	Family Weights	OLS	Family Weights	H4 Weights	H5 Weights
discusses saving	5	0.193 (0.089)	0	-0.131 (0.098)	0.148		0.206
discusses emp opportunities	5	0.119 (0.074)	0	-0.082 (0.090)	0		0
discusses business plans	5	-0.009 (0.083)	0	0.076 (0.102)	0		0
financial planning	5	0.05 (0.082)	0	-0.018 (0.085)	0		0
financial separation	5	-0.051 (0.098)	0	0.056 (0.101)	0		0

Columns (1) and (3) present OLS estimates and standard errors clustered at the village level from outcome-by-outcome regressions of Equation (10), while Columns (2), (4), (5), and (6) report the estimated optimum weights from that specification. Columns (1) and (2) focus on the estimates and weights associated with IYDA while Columns (3) through (6) focus on the estimates and weights associated with cash transfers. Optimum weights are zero for IYDA as different folds did not produce a consistent sign.

Table A8: OLS results and Optimum Weights, DRC Economic Outcomes

DRC Resilience Outcomes, continued							
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		IYDA		Cash Transfers			
Indicator	Hypothesis	OLS	Family Weights	OLS	Family Weights	H6 Weights	H7 Weights
worked for others	6	0.07 (0.072)	0.075	-0.005 (0.085)	0	0.027	
worked for self	6	-0.082 (0.065)	0	0.16 (0.080)	0.091	0.345	
total earnings	6	-0.055 (0.050)	0	0.048 (0.056)	0	0.007	
total hours worked	6	-0.055 (0.084)	0	0.234 (0.109)	0.171	0.528	
total business assets	6	0.132 (0.076)	0.164	0.059 (0.087)	0.002	0.104	
migrated for work	6	0.069 (0.071)	0.068	-0.142 (0.067)	0	0	

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		DRC Economic Outcomes, Continued					
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		IYDA		Cash Transfers			
Indicator	Hypothesis	OLS	Family Weights	OLS	Family Weights	H6 Weights	H7 Weights
log food consumption	7	0.112 (0.068)	0.16	0.027 (0.067)	0		0
log non-food consumption	7	0.055 (0.068)	0	0.071 (0.069)	0.056		0.096
any savings	7	0.182 (0.078)	0.372	0.133 (0.080)	0.071		0.106
total savings	7	0.047 (0.067)	0	0.185 (0.080)	0.054		0.098
number of meals missed (resp)	7	0.078 (0.115)	0	0.122 (0.107)	0.035		0.038
number of meals missed (children)	7	0.07 (0.109)	0.06	0.168 (0.099)	0.106		0.13
log total non-business assets	7	0.054 (0.066)	0	0.036 (0.075)	0		0
total health spending (month)	7	0.056 (0.067)	0.126	-0.007 (0.080)	0		0
total education spending (year)	7	-0.039 (0.060)	0	0.099 (0.069)	0.06		0.074
HH received remittances	7	0.002 (0.062)	0	0.225 (0.135)	0.094		0.117
HH member migrated for work	7	0.067 (0.071)	0.058	-0.135 (0.067)	0		0
food security index (FIES)	7	-0.076 (0.071)	0	0.377 (0.094)	0.318		0.418

Columns (1) and (3) present OLS estimates and standard errors clustered at the village level from outcome-by-outcome regressions of Equation (10), while Columns (2), (4), (5), and (6) report the estimated optimum weights from that specification. Columns (1) and (2) focus on the estimates and weights associated with IYDA while Columns (3) through (6) focus on the estimates and weights associated with cash transfers.

Table A9: Disaggregated OHIE Results (100% Sample)

Indicator (standardized outcome)	(1) ITT estimate	(2) RW <i>p</i> -val
<i>Subfamily: Utilization, prevention, access</i>		
Currently taking any prescription medications	0.039 (0.023)	0.845
Any primary care visits	0.103 (0.023)	0.000
Any ER visits	0.021 (0.023)	1.000
Any hospital visits	-0.009 (0.023)	1.000
Number of prescription meds currently taking	0.069 (0.023)	0.090
Number of primary care visits	0.098 (0.023)	0.000
Number of ER visits	0.012 (0.023)	1.000
Number of hospital visits	0.012 (0.023)	1.000
Ever had cholesterol checked	0.031 (0.024)	0.965
Ever had diabetes checked	0.059 (0.023)	0.245
Ever had a mammogram	0.067 (0.023)	0.105
Ever had a pap smear	0.066 (0.022)	0.105
Ever had diabetes/sugar diabetes diagnosis	-0.003 (0.023)	1.000
Ever had asthma diagnosis	-0.013 (0.023)	1.000
Ever had high blood pressure diagnosis	0.014 (0.023)	1.000

Indicator (standardized outcome)	(1) ITT estimate	(2) RW <i>p</i> -val
Ever had COPD diagnosis	0.047 (0.023)	0.590
Ever had heart disease/angina diagnosis	-0.036 (0.023)	0.890
Ever had congestive heart failure diagnosis	0.016 (0.024)	1.000
Ever had depression/anxiety diagnosis	-0.007 (0.023)	1.000
Ever had high cholesterol diagnosis	0.011 (0.023)	1.000
Ever had kidney disease diagnosis	-0.027 (0.023)	0.975
Usual place of care is clinic	0.154 (0.024)	0.000
Have personal doctor	0.129 (0.024)	0.000
Got all needed medical care in last 6 months	0.158 (0.023)	0.000
Got all needed prescriptions in last 6 months	0.105 (0.023)	0.000
Did not use ER for non-ER care	-0.002 (0.023)	1.000
<i>Subfamily: Health</i>		
Overall health excellent/good	0.051 (0.023)	0.490
Overall health not poor	0.047 (0.023)	0.620
Change in overall health (positive is better)	0.097 (0.023)	0.000
Number of days (in past 30) not impaired by poor health	0.013 (0.023)	1.000
Number of days (in past 30) when physical health good	0.009 (0.023)	1.000

Indicator (standardized outcome)	(1) ITT estimate	(2) RW <i>p</i> -val
Number of days (in past 30) when mental health good	-0.002 (0.024)	1.000
Not depressed in past 2 weeks	-0.005 (0.023)	1.000
Not current smoker	-0.029 (0.023)	0.965
Physical activity (compared to others of same age)	-0.027 (0.023)	0.975
Current overall happiness (higher is better)	0.063 (0.023)	0.150
<i>Subfamily: Financial</i>		
Household income as percent of federal poverty line	0.009 (0.024)	1.000
Household income category	0.016 (0.024)	1.000
Currently employed	-0.003 (0.023)	1.000
Average weekly hours worked	0 (0.023)	1.000
No out of pocket costs for medical care in past 6 months	0.183 (0.023)	0.000
Do not currently owe money for medical expenses	0.045 (0.023)	0.665
Haven't borrowed to pay health care bills in past 6 months	0.109 (0.024)	0.000
Haven't been refused care because owed money for past treatment	0.048 (0.023)	0.620

Notes: Results in Column (1) represent coefficients from a regression of the listed indicator (standardized to unit variance) on an intention-to-treat indicator using the 100% sample ($N = 8,141$), controlling for household size and survey round fixed effects. Parentheses contain standard errors clustered at the household level. Column (2) reports Romano-Wolf *p*-values that control FWER across the 44 outcomes in the table.

Table A10: OHIE Results: Gating and Individual Indicator Hypotheses

<i>Test:</i>	(1) Power	(2) Effect Size	(3) Index Size	(4) True Effect Size
Optimus	71%	0.092	9.0	0.099
KLK Index	58%	0.038	44	0.039
F Omnibus	73%			
LMS Omnibus	38%			
Exhaustive PAP	58%	0.213 ⁺	1.3 ⁺⁺	0.131
PAP (post optimus gate)	51%	0.214 ⁺	1.3 ⁺⁺	0.131

Notes: Results in Columns (1) – (3) represent averages across 100 random 10% samples of the OHIE data. Power denotes power to reject the sharp null hypothesis for at least one indicator. True effect size represents the estimated effect in the full (100% sample) OHIE dataset, with indicators weighted using average weights underlying Column (2).

+ Average effect size for indicators rejected by the PAP (when no indicator rejects, calculation includes the most significant indicator).

++ Average number of indicators rejected, left-censored at 1.

Table A11: Indicators and Weights in OHIE

Hypothesis	Indicator Name	Variable Label	Weight
	neg_cost_any_oop_12m	No out of pocket costs for medical care in past 6 months	0.194
	usual_clinic_12m	Usual place of care is clinic	0.088
	doc_any_12m	Any primary care visits	0.067
	needmet_med_12m	Got all needed medical care in last 6 months	0.060
	needmet_rx_12m	Got all needed prescriptions in last 6 months	0.044
	health_chgflip_bin_12m	Change in overall health (positive is better)	0.040
	usual_doc_12m	Have personal doctor	0.036
	neg_cost_borrow_12m	Haven't borrowed to pay health care bills in past 6 months	0.033
	doc_num_mod_12m	Number of primary care visits	0.033
	emp_dx_12m	Ever had COPD diagnosis	0.032
	rx_num_mod_12m	Number of prescription meds currently taking	0.027
	dia_chk_bin_12m	Ever had diabetes checked	0.026
	mam_chk_bin_all_12m	Ever had a mammogram	0.026
	rx_any_12m	Currently taking any prescription medications	0.023
All Outcomes	pap_chk_bin_all_12m	Ever had a pap smear	0.023
	neg_cost_refused_12m	Haven't been refused care because owed money for past treatment	0.017
	neg_cost_any_owe_12m	Do not currently owe money for medical expenses	0.016
	poshappiness_bin_12m	Current overall happiness (higher is better)	0.016
	health_notpoor_12m	Overall health not poor	0.016
	chl_dx_12m	Ever had high cholesterol diagnosis	0.013
	hhinc_pctfpl_12m	Household income as percent of federal poverty line	0.012
	chf_dx_12m	Ever had congestive heart failure diagnosis	0.012
	er_any_12m	Any ER visits	0.012
	er_num_mod_12m	Number of ER visits	0.012
	health_genflip_bin_12m	Overall health excellent/good	0.012
	hbp_dx_12m	Ever had high blood pressure diagnosis	0.010
	chl_chk_bin_12m	Ever had cholesterol checked	0.010
	employ_hrs_12m	Average weekly hours worked	0.010
	hhinc_cat_12m	Household income category	0.010

Hypothesis	Indicator Name	Variable Label	Weight
	needmet_med_12m	Got all needed medical care in last 6 months	0.177
	usual_clinic_12m	Usual place of care is clinic	0.129
	needmet_rx_12m	Got all needed prescriptions in last 6 months	0.123
	doc_any_12m	Any primary care visits	0.052
	emp_dx_12m	Ever had COPD diagnosis	0.050
	usual_doc_12m	Have personal doctor	0.050
	doc_num_mod_12m	Number of primary care visits	0.045
	dia_chk_bin_12m	Ever had diabetes checked	0.039
	pap_chk_bin_all_12m	Ever had a pap smear	0.038
	mam_chk_bin_all_12m	Ever had a mammogram	0.037
Utilization, prevention, access	rx_num_mod_12m	Number of prescription meds currently taking	0.026
	chf_dx_12m	Ever had congestive heart failure diagnosis	0.019
	er_any_12m	Any ER visits	0.018
	chl_dx_12m	Ever had high cholesterol diagnosis	0.017
	not_er_noner_12m	Did not use ER for non-ER care	0.016
	hosp_num_mod_12m	Number of hospital visits	0.015
	hbp_dx_12m	Ever had high blood pressure diagnosis	0.014
	chl_chk_bin_12m	Ever had cholesterol checked	0.014
	rx_any_12m	Currently taking any prescription medications	0.014
	dep_dx_12m	Ever had depression/anxiety diagnosis	0.014
	er_num_mod_12m	Number of ER visits	0.013
	dia_dx_12m	Ever had diabetes/sugar diabetes diagnosis	0.011
	ast_dx_12m	Ever had asthma diagnosis	0.011

Hypothesis	Indicator Name	Variable Label	Weight
Health	health_chgflip_bin_12m	Change in overall health (positive is better)	0.198
	poshappiness_bin_12m	Current overall happiness (higher is better)	0.123
	nonsmk_curr_12m	Not current smoker	0.097
	health_notpoor_12m	Overall health not poor	0.094
	more_active_12m	Physical activity (compared to others of same age)	0.072
	health_genflip_bin_12m	Overall health excellent/good	0.062
	nodep_screen_12m	Not depressed in past 2 weeks	0.052
	notbaddays_tot_12m	Number of days (in past 30) not impaired by poor health	0.038
	notbaddays_phys_12m	Number of days (in past 30) when physical health good	0.032
	notbaddays_ment_12m	Number of days (in past 30) when mental health good	0.026
Financial	neg_cost_any_oop_12m	No out of pocket costs for medical care in past 6 months	0.399
	neg_cost_borrow_12m	Haven't borrowed to pay health care bills in past 6 months	0.142
	neg_cost_refused_12m	Haven't been refused care because owed money for past treatment	0.110
	hhinc_pctfpl_12m	Household income as percent of federal poverty line	0.072
	neg_cost_any_owe_12m	Do not currently owe money for medical expenses	0.066
	hhinc_cat_12m	Household income category	0.062
	employ_hrs_12m	Average weekly hours worked	0.045
	employ_12m	Currently employed	0.038

Notes: Hypothesis refers to the family or subfamily of indicators used to construct the optimus index. Weight represents average weight received by an indicator variable across 100 random 10% samples.

Table A12: OHIE Results by Sample Size: Gating Hypotheses and Individual Indicators

Test	(1) Power	(2) Effect Size	(3) Index Size	(4) True Effect Size
Panel A: 8% sample				
Optimus	54%	0.086	8.8	0.092
KLK Index	50%	0.041	44	0.039
F Omnibus	47%			
LMS Omnibus	38%			
Exhaustive PAP	48%	0.211 ⁺	1.3 ⁺⁺	0.115
PAP (post optimus gate)	34%	0.211 ⁺	1.2 ⁺⁺	0.115
Panel B: 12% sample				
Optimus	85%	0.097	9.6	0.102
KLK Index	71%	0.04	44	0.039
F Omnibus	80%			
LMS Omnibus	57%			
Exhaustive PAP	67%	0.207 ⁺	1.6 ⁺⁺	0.136
PAP (post optimus gate)	61%	0.207 ⁺	1.5 ⁺⁺	0.137
Panel C: 15% sample				
Optimus	90%	0.097	9.9	0.105
KLK Index	77%	0.037	44	0.039
F Omnibus	89%			
LMS Omnibus	57%			
Exhaustive PAP	75%	0.209 ⁺	1.8 ⁺⁺	0.141
PAP (post optimus gate)	70%	0.209 ⁺	1.8 ⁺⁺	0.141

Notes: Results in Columns (1) – (3) represent averages across 100 random 8%, 12%, or 15% samples of the OHIE data. Power denotes power to reject the sharp null hypothesis for at least one indicator. True effect size represents the estimated effect in the full (100% sample) OHIE dataset, with indicators weighted using average weights underlying Column (2).

+ Average effect size for indicators rejected by the PAP (when no indicator rejects, calculation includes the most significant indicator).

++ Average number of indicators rejected, left-censored at 1.

Table A13: OHIE Results: Subfamily Hypotheses

Test	(1) Power	(2) Effect Size	(3) Index Size	(4) True Effect Size
Panel A: Utilization outcomes				
Optimus	36%	0.087	5.6	0.094
F Omnibus	30%			
KLK Index	21%	0.042	26	0.043
Panel B: Health outcomes				
Optimus	7%	0.028	2.3	0.038
F Omnibus	4%			
KLK Index	2%	0.021	10	0.022
Panel C: Financial outcomes				
Optimus	23%	0.095	2.7	0.105
F Omnibus	20%			
KLK Index	17%	0.049	8	0.051

Notes: Results in Columns (1) – (3) represent averages across 100 random 10% samples of the OHIE data. Power denotes power to reject the sharp null hypothesis for at least one subfamily indicator, multiplicity adjusted for the three parallel subfamily tests. True effect size represents the estimated effect in the full (100% sample) OHIE dataset, with indicators weighted using average weights underlying Column (2).