“Resource Scarcity: Consequences and Interventions”

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Scarcity is a pervasive problem in the world: 1.4 billion people in extreme poverty (with less than $1.25 a day), 1.2 billion people live without electricity, and more than 780 million lack access to clean water. In this talk, Dr. Zhao will present a theoretical framework that demonstrates that poverty consumes cognitive resources, forces attentional tradeoffs, and impairs cognitive function. Ironically, scarcity causes a failure to notice useful information in the environment that can alleviate the condition of scarcity, and a failure to remember prior instructions to execute future actions, which, if remembered, would have saved resources. Such neglect and forgetting can explain a range of counter-productive behaviors of the poor (e.g., failure to show up for appointments). These adverse cognitive impacts are particularly problematic because they further perpetuate the condition of scarcity, resulting in a vicious cycle of poverty. To mitigate the cognitive tax of poverty, Dr. Zhao will discuss a few interventions (e.g., cash transfers, self-affirmation) that are currently running in the field. The current findings provide new explanations on the counter-productive behaviors of the poor, and important implications for the design of policies and services for low-income individuals.

Friday, February 23, 2018
12:45pm-2:00pm

The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Community Studies Center
Room 115

(Refreshments provided)

Please RSVP to Gail by February 9, 2018 @ gail.daniels@case.edu or 216-368-2686