

Name: **Hamza Abdelrahman**
SFU faculty/major: Economics

Title of presentation: Drugs, Alcohol, and Crime: Welfare in Vancouver

Abstract

Every month, the B.C. government provides Income and Disability Assistance to over 200,000 residents on a day known as Welfare Wednesday. Using data on alcohol sales and drug crimes in Vancouver, I find that the arrival of Welfare Wednesday leads to a significant increase in alcohol purchases and drug-related crimes, suggesting that recipients spend a sizable portion of their welfare income quickly after receiving rather than budget for the entire month. I argue that the structure of the provincial welfare system exacerbates the problem and makes it more difficult for recipients to break the cycle of poverty.