2020 NIMHD Health Disparities Research Institute

Scholar Biographies

Kehinde Adekola, MD, MS

Dr. Kehinde Adekola is a hematologist and oncologist and is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hematology-Oncology at Feinberg School of Medicine and the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern University. She received her medical degree from the University of Lagos, and then completed a fellowship in clinical chemistry at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas. She subsequently completed a residency in internal medicine at SUNY Downstate (Brooklyn, New York), followed by a fellowship in Hematology/Oncology at Northwestern University (Chicago, Illinois). She then completed a fellowship in Stem Cell Transplantation and Cellular Therapy at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center (Houston, Texas). Her clinical practice focuses on stem cell transplantation/bone marrow transplantation for both malignant and non-malignant diseases. Her research interests include patient outcomes after these stem cell transplants, cancer health disparities—specifically in hematologic disorders—and global health with improvement in outcomes for hematologic and oncologic conditions in all regions. Dr. Adekola serves on the Minority Recruitment Initiative Programs Committee and the Friday Satellite Symposia (FSS) Study Section for the American Society of Hematology.

Paris B. Adkins-Jackson, PhD, MPH

Dr. Paris "AJ" Adkins-Jackson was recently a Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles. She earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Psychometrics from Morgan State University, a Master of Public Health with an emphasis in applied biostatistics and epidemiology from Claremont Graduate University, a Master of Arts in Cultural Anthropology from California Institute of Integral Studies, and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Humboldt State University. Dr. AJ is a multidisciplinary, community-partnered researcher whose work resides at the intersection of mixed methodology and social determinants of health. As a statistician and psychometrician, her research involves the utilization of mixed data to develop and validate culturally responsive assessments of individual behaviors and quality measures of institutional behaviors. As an interventionist, she uses culturally responsive technology and programs in multisector partnerships to eliminate health disparities by improving minority health. Dr. AJ's dissertation research applied mixed methods toward the development of a culturally responsive theory and assessment of self-care for African American women. As a postdoctoral scholar, she converted the assessment into a nine-week intervention with a mobile application and sister circles that were piloted in Baltimore, Maryland. She is currently testing a multi-level measure of institutional racism in academic medical centers that she developed. Dr. AJ serves as a board member of the Society for the Analysis of African American Public Health Issues as well as the Section Councilor and Communication Chair of the Applied Public Health Statistics section of the American Public Health Association.

Riana Elyse Anderson, PhD

Dr. Riana Elyse Anderson is an Assistant Professor of Health Behaviors and Health Education at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. She earned her PhD in Clinical and Community Psychology at the University of Virginia and completed a Clinical and Community Psychology Doctoral Internship at Yale University's School of Medicine. She also completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Applied Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Anderson uses mixed methods to study racial discrimination and racial socialization in Black families and applies her findings to help families reduce racial stress and heal from racial trauma. She is particularly interested in how family-based interventions help to improve Black youth's psychosocial well-being and health-related behaviors. Dr. Anderson is the developer and director of the EMBRace (Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race) intervention and loves to translate her work for a variety of audiences, particularly those whom she serves in the community, via blogs, video, and literary articles. Dr. Anderson is involved nationally as an appointed member of the American Psychological Association's Children, Youth, and Families committee and serves on task forces specifically related to racial discrimination with the Society for Research on Adolescence and the National Science Foundation. Dr. Anderson serves as the co-founder, -writer, -producer, and -host of Our Mental Health Minute, a psychoeducational vlog and podcast geared towards reducing stigma in the Black community by emphasizing brief culturally relevant mental health practices and problems. Additionally, for her early career accomplishments, Dr. Anderson has been the recipient of over a dozen awards.

Tommy K. Begay, PhD, MPH

Dr. Tommy K. Begay is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, College of Medicine, University of Arizona. He received his PhD in Cultural Psychology from the University of Arizona. As an investigator and practitioner, his academic training provides a focus on the interrelationship of culture, biology, and environment to understand human behavior as applicable to health and wellness. Dr. Begay possesses a Master of Public Health degree, with a specialty in International Health, from the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health at the University of Arizona. His research interests include Native American health, especially in relation to the impact of historical trauma, and the subsequent evolution of intergenerational, maladaptive coping behaviors that contribute to the disproportionately high rates of stress-related chronic diseases, cancer, interpersonal violence, substance abuse, and addiction—all major contributing factors to the contemporary health and wellness of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Within this population, Dr. Begay is particularly interested in the prevalence of adverse childhood stress, and intergenerational trauma, to better understand the underlying mechanisms that contribute to the continuation of psychosocial risk factors that are associated with cardiometabolic diseases, sleep disparities, depression and other psychiatric disorders that have a tendency to get passed down to the next generation. Dr. Begay is a member of the Sleep and Health Research Program and serves as Faculty Affiliate with the Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience Laboratory. Both are entities of the University of Arizona Department of Psychiatry.

Afsan Bhadelia, PhD, MS

Dr. Afsan Bhadelia is a Research Associate in the Department of Global Health and Population at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and a Visiting Scholar at the University of Miami. She received her PhD in International Health and Health Systems from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and an MS in Food Policy and Applied Nutrition and BS in Biology and International Relations from Tufts University. She applies and translates systems theory to three core areas to promote health systems performance improvements and to advance value-based care: 1) health inequities faced by marginalized populations, 2) chronicity and its implications for health systems strengthening across the care continuum and life course, and 3) gender responsiveness of healthcare. Using mixed methods, each area incorporates a focus on developing innovative metrics for priority-setting and implementation, with a particular emphasis on integrating ethical considerations. Dr. Bhadelia seeks to advance dynamic health systems modeling and effective policy analysis and translation to achieve better health outcomes. Dr. Bhadelia was a lead co-author of the report of the Lancet Commission on Global Access to Palliative Care and Pain Relief and co-Chaired the Commission's Scientific Advisory Committee. She co-authored and co-edited the book, "Closing the Cancer Divide: An Equity Imperative." She was previously named a "Young Cancer Leader" by the Union for International Cancer Control and has served as a Minority International Research Trainee and an Albert Schweitzer Fellow. She is currently co-Chair of the Taskforce on Women and NCDs.

Stephanie D. Boone, PhD

Dr. Stephanie Boone is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Population Health and a member of the James Graham Brown Cancer Center at the University of Louisville. She received her PhD in Public Health and MPH from the University of Louisville. Dr. Boone is a cancer epidemiologist and her research involves multi-level evaluation of social, behavioral, and biological determinants of cancer health disparities. Her emphasis is on psychosocial outcomes among cancer survivors and influences on risk of comorbid conditions and survival. Dr. Boone's work has revealed that, compared to non-Hispanic White women with breast cancer, Hispanic breast cancer survivors are more likely to die of breast cancer within the first five years of diagnosis and Hispanic women who survive >10 years have poorer quality of life. More recently, her work has shown that cancer survivors in rural areas (vs. urban) are more likely to report a combination of poor health behaviors and is associated with higher odds of poor mental health indicators. Now, Dr. Boone is leading a feasibility study of using a web-based platform for data collection from urban and rural cancer survivors in Kentucky. In 2019, Dr. Boone became State-PI for an NHLBI-funded epidemiology grant, called RURAL (Risk Underlying Rural Areas Longitudinal) Heart & Lung Study, which aims to determine why some rural counties are more resilient than others in regards to cardiovascular disease outcomes and includes a representative sampling frame in 10 rural counties between Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Omonigho M. Bubu, MD, PhD, MPH

Dr. Omonigho Bubu is an Assistant Professor and physician scientist at NYU Grossman School of Medicine (NYUSoM), in the Departments of Psychiatry and Population Health, with a programmatic research focus on sleep, aging and Alzheimer's disease (AD) in blacks. Dr. Bubu has graduate, internship, and fellowship-level clinical and research training in neurology, neuroepidemiology and public health. He received his MD from University of Benin, MPH in Health Policy and Management from Emory University, and PhD in Neuroepidemiology from University of South Florida. His research examines how both vascular risk and age-related and age-dependent sleep impact cognitive decline and AD risk, and how they drive AD-related disparities. He was recently supported as a postdoctoral fellow at NYUSoM under a T32 funding mechanism, and awarded an NIA-funded Columbia Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Alzheimer's disease Disparities Pilot (CIRAD; P30 AG059303) grant to conduct original research on the interaction of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and race on plasma tau and neurofilament light protein. Dr. Bubu has continued to establish his national presence as a sleep and AD investigator, and has collaborated with experts in the field on intramural, foundation, and NIH grants, with significant contributions that have improved our understanding of the relationship between OSA and AD. He currently serves as an ad-hoc reviewer for multiple high impact journals, including Alzheimer & Dementia, Sleep Medicine Reviews, JAMA Network, SLEEP, Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine, and Biobehavioral Reviews and Neurology.

Henna Budhwani, PhD, MPH

Dr. Henna Budhwani is an Assistant Professor in the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Public Health, an NIMH K01 scholar, UAB Site PI for the NICHD-sponsored Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions (ATN, iTech U19 and SIU U19), and Director of Caribbean Programs with the UAB Sparkman Center for Global Health. Dr. Budhwani is a social scientist who conducts studies to better understand and address the causes and consequences of health disparities among underserved—often stigmatized—populations that are at high risk for adverse health outcomes in resource-constrained global and domestic settings. Her research is intersectional, informed by sociological constructs, guided by human rights frameworks, and adopts a multidimensional view of how to address public health and clinical care gaps. Dr. Budhwani has active intervention studies with high-risk adolescents and young adults in rural and urban settings, sexual and gender minorities (men who have sex with men and transgender women) of color, HIV providers, and youth living with HIV (YLWH). Dr. Budhwani has been named one of Birmingham's Top 40 Under 40, received the Vulcan Award for Civic Engagement from the Mayor of Birmingham, and was named to the "Smart Party" (Women who Inspire) by The Women's Fund of Birmingham. In 2020, Dr. Budhwani received the biennial Robert Carr Research Award from the International AIDS Society, Human Rights Watch, and Johns Hopkins University for her population size estimates study across six eastern Caribbean Islands.

Billy A. Caceres, PhD, RN

Dr. Billy A. Caceres is an Assistant Professor at the Columbia University School of Nursing in the Program for the Study of LGBT Health. He received his PhD in Nursing at New York University and a postdoctoral fellowship in Comparative and Cost Effectiveness Research at Columbia University. Dr. Caceres is a cardiovascular nurse scientist with expertise in social determinants of cardiovascular health in sexual and gender minority adults across the lifespan. His research examines the influence of adverse life experiences on cardiovascular disease risk in sexual and gender minority adults with an emphasis on women and racial/ethnic minorities. Dr. Caceres is the recipient of a five-year Mentored Research Scientist Development Award from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute that uses a sibling design to examine the associations of adverse life experiences and resilience factors with cardiovascular health among sexual minority women and their heterosexual sisters. In 2017, he was awarded the Martha N. Hill New Investigator Award from the American Heart Association for his research on interpersonal trauma and cardiometabolic risk among sexual minority women. Dr. Caceres is a 2020 recipient of the National Institutes of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority Early Stage Investigator Award. He has held leadership positions in national organizations including the American Heart Association and Gerontological Society of America.

David Camacho, PhD, MSW, MSG

Dr. David Camacho is a T32 Postdoctoral Associate in Behavioral Geriatrics at Weill Cornell Medicine's Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine. He completed his PhD in Social Work in Advanced Practice at Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. He earned a Master of Social Work and a Master of Science in Gerontology from the University of Southern California. His academic and research pursuits are motivated by personal experiences as a Mexican-American gay man, caregiver to older parents, and social worker for primarily monolingual Spanish speaking Latino immigrants. Dr. Camacho's research agenda includes gaining a deeper understanding of loneliness, chronic pain, and cognitive impairment among racial and sexual minority older adults and the implementation of promising interventions. With support from the Council on Social Work Education Minority Fellowship Program, his dissertation examined the relationship between loneliness and chronic pain among racially/ethnically diverse community dwelling older adults in the U.S. Most recently, Dr. Camacho was named an emerging scholar in the NIA-sponsored Interdisciplinary Aging Research to Address Health Disparities in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Scientific Training Program. With support from the Columbia Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Alzheimer's Disease Disparities, Dr. Camacho will examine the role of minority stress in understanding the relationship between loneliness, chronic pain, and cognitive functioning among racially diverse older adults. He also collaborates on multiple studies that examine the implementation of interventions that address treatment priorities of older Latinos with chronic pain and advanced care planning for those living with cancer.

Gregory A. Carter, PhD

Dr. Gregory A. Carter is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health Systems at the Indiana University Bloomington School of Nursing. He received his MS degree from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and his PhD from Indiana University School of Public Health in Health Behavior. Dr. Carter is an advanced practice nurse and an expert in HIV prevention, specifically on designing studies to identify barriers to HIV screening and designing community-based HIV prevention interventions. His primary focus is the uptake of pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, among racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities in rural areas. Dr. Carter also studies the social constructs of sexuality among men who have sex with other men and the implications of stigma on safer sex practices. Dr. Carter's work has highlighted multiple disparities involving adverse childhood experiences and advanced practice nurses' willingness to prescribe PrEP, with implications for improving community- and hospital-based HIV prevention programs. Dr. Carter is developing a cross-sectional study exploring PrEP misconceptions among Black and Latinx men and women in Indiana. Dr. Carter serves on the Substance Use Disorder Community Awareness Commission. He is a recipient of the LGBT Spirit Award as well as the Indiana Rural Health Education award.

Noé Rubén Chávez, PhD

Dr. Noé Rubén Chávez is an Assistant Professor of Urban Public Health and Community Counseling at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. He received his PhD in Community Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago and his MA in Social/Personality Psychology from the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Chávez is a community psychologist with research interests in youth participatory action research, youth positive development, and mental health. He has collaborated with multiple stakeholders from academia, non-profit organizations, medical centers, public schools, and community-based organizations, in various urban contexts, including the South Side of Chicago, New York City, and currently in South Los Angeles. Recently, during his postdoctoral research fellowship at the comprehensive cancer center of City of Hope, he collaborated with biologists on science education for underrepresented youth of color. He is working with the MLK Community Healing and Trauma Prevention Center in South Los Angeles to develop, implement and evaluate a youth participatory action research (YPAR) mental health curriculum to improve positive developmental and mental health outcomes in youth of color. Dr. Chávez is current Member-at-Large for the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA-Division 27 of the American Psychological Association), SCRA Leadership Development Fellow 2018-2020, Member of the Editorial Boards of the Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities and Journal of Latinx Psychology. He is also active in several other national committees and advisory councils related to immigrant justice, health equity, and inclusive/culturally responsive evaluation.

Philip Cheng, PhD

Dr. Philip Cheng is an Assistant Scientist at the Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, Michigan. He received his PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Michigan. Dr. Cheng specializes in sleep and circadian science, with emphasis on translational medicine that is equitable and widely accessible. Dr. Cheng's work has demonstrated that digitally delivered Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (dCBT-I) can reduce racial disparities in insomnia for those who complete treatment; however, he has also shown that those with less socioeconomic resources disproportionately disengage from dCBT-I. Without equitable solutions, digital sleep health technologies will only widen health disparities, leaving those who are already disenfranchised with the compounding effects of chronic insomnia. Dr. Cheng is also currently funded on an NIH career development award to examine the clinical translation of pathophysiological phenotypes in shift work disorder, which disproportionately impacts people of color. Dr. Cheng's scholarly activities also include developing and implementing curriculum for the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experience in Research (CIMER). The mission of CIMER is to advance diversity in the research enterprise through the dissemination of evidence-based and culturally responsive interventions for research mentors, particularly those working with underrepresented minorities. He brings these experiences to his leadership role on the Trainee Education Advisory Committee in the Sleep Research Society. Dr. Cheng has received the Michigan Academy for Sleep Medicine Excellence in Research Award and the Faces of the Future Award from the Society for Research in Psychopathology.

Marc D. Cook, PhD, MS

Dr. Marc D. Cook is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at North Carolina A&T State University. He completed his MS and PhD in Exercise Physiology & Immunology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Cook is a Clinical Exercise Physiologist, certified by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) since 2005, with an expertise concerning the role of exercise and the immune system on vascular health and function. His master's work investigated the relationship between cardiorespiratory fitness level and immune cell responsiveness to vaccination in animals and older adults. His doctoral work revealed the anti-inflammatory impact of exercise training on the gut microbiome and on intestinal inflammation. Dr. Cook completed his postdoctoral research training at the University of Illinois at Chicago with a focus on anti-inflammatory molecular mechanisms of endothelial cell responses to laminar shear stress in culture. Dr. Cook has performed exercise training interventions in many disease populations including diabetes, morbid obesity, cancer, hypertension, and heart failure. Dr. Cook's current work includes translational research (in vitro—endothelial cell culture and in vivo—exercise interventions) to investigate novel biomarkers of racial health disparities concerning the interaction between the gut microbiome, exercise, and endothelial (in vitro) and vascular (in vivo) dysfunction (hypertension). He currently has two active clinical trials, funded by the American Heart Association and an NIH NCTraCS pilot grant, to define novel biomarkers of gut microbial health in effort to attenuate the health disparity involving hypertension and subsequent cardiovascular disease in African Americans.

JaNeen E. Cross, DSW, MSW, MBA

Dr. JaNeen E. Cross is an Assistant Professor at the Howard University School of Social Work and former National Association of Social Workers, Health Education and Leadership Scholar health policy postdoctoral fellow. She received her Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work degrees from Temple University. She has a Master of Business Administration degree and a graduate certificate in Health Care Administration from Rosemont College. Dr. Cross has a Doctorate of Clinical Social Work from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Cross is a clinical social worker specializing in maternal child health, focusing in particular on support for families with infants in the newborn intensive care unit and health disparities in perinatal health. Dr. Cross studies the impact of newborn intensive care on maternal-infant bonding and health outcomes. She also examines the impacts of perinatal experiences on maternal mental health, morbidity, and mortality. Dr. Cross was recently appointed by Mayor Muriel Bowser to the District of Columbia Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC). She is also an expert on the Council for Social Work Education Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and Developmental Neuroscience Task Force.

Valerie Danesh, PhD, RN

Dr. Valerie Danesh is an Assistant Professor of Nursing at the University of Texas at Austin and a Clinical Investigator at Baylor Scott & White Health. She earned her PhD in Nursing at the University of Central Florida. Dr. Danesh is a critical care nurse and health services researcher with expertise in the monitoring and surveillance of critically ill patients to improve patient outcomes. Her key emphasis is on escalations of care, including exploring patient outcomes and disparities associated with interhospital transfers of critically ill patients between rural and tertiary care centers. Beyond the hospital setting, the sequelae of critical illness can persist following hospital discharge, with long-term physical, cognitive, and psychological effects (post-intensive care syndrome). Dr. Danesh's work in the monitoring and surveillance of critically ill patients extends into the post-ICU recovery period, to develop, deliver, and test self-management interventions tailored to survivors of critical illness. Dr. Danesh serves on the American College of Critical Care Medicine task force for the development of clinical practice guidelines for the monitoring and surveillance of critical illness outside the ICU. She was elected as a Fellow of the American College of Critical Care Medicine in 2019.

Malini B. DeSilva, MD, MPH

Dr. Malini B. DeSilva is a Research Associate at HealthPartners Institute, an affiliated faculty appointment at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Medicine's Global Health Pathway and practicing physician for both the HealthPartners Travel & Tropical Medicine Department and the St. Paul-Ramsey County Tuberculosis Clinic. She received her MD from Mayo Medical School and an MPH from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. Dr. DeSilva completed her Med-Peds residency at the University of Minnesota and is double boarded in both internal medicine and pediatrics. Following residency, she completed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Epidemic Intelligence Service. Health disparities issues have been at the center of both her clinical and research interests, particularly focused on addressing health challenges among persons experiencing homeless and non-English speaking populations. Her current research focuses on refugee and immigrant health, vaccine preventable diseases, and use of clinical decision support tools for both chronic and communicable diseases. Dr. DeSilva serves as one of the co-chairs for the Digital Bridge Immunization Registry workgroup.

Jaapna Dhillon, PhD

Dr. Jaapna Dhillon is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She received her PhD in Nutrition Science with a focus in ingestive behavior from Purdue University, an MS in Nutrition Science with a focus in community nutrition and dietetics from Syracuse University and a BTech in Bioinformatics from JUIT in India. Her current research examines: 1) the effects of dietary interventions on cardiometabolic outcomes, gut microbiome, and multi-omics profiles, and 2) pre- and post-ingestive controls of food intake. Her research also integrates large datasets generated from dietary interventions into developing computational models that can predict metabolic responses to diets. Dr. Dhillon received the K99/R00 award from NIMHD in 2018 to: 1) examine the effects of a functional food-based personalized diet on cardiometabolic and metabolomics outcomes in young adults at risk for metabolic disorders, and 2) assess whether improvements in diet will influence racial/ethnic minority groups differentially than non-Hispanic Whites. She recently joined the American Society of Nutrition's Research Task Force.

Yarneccia D. Dyson, PhD, MSW

Dr. Yarneccia D. Dyson is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she also teaches in the Joint Master of Social Work Program and serves on the Development Committee for the newly formed Joint PhD Program with North Carolina A&T State University. She received a PhD in Social Work Policy, Planning, and Administration & Social Science (Cognate: Public Health) from the Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. She also obtained a Bachelor of Social Work from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University and a Master of Social Work (clinical concentration) from The Florida State University. As a Social and Behavioral Scientist, Dr. Dyson engages in health disparities research that focuses on reducing and alleviating negative health outcomes by empowering marginalized communities through Implementation Science. Currently, Dr. Dyson is the Principal Investigator of Engage3, a Pilot Study that tests the feasibility of a biomedical-behavioral HIV prevention intervention that she developed based on the findings from an initial study that focused on addressing the sexual health needs of black college students enrolled at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSI). Notably, she is a Distinguished Faculty Fellow of the Center for Health Equity Research Institute of CSU Long Beach. Finally, Dr. Dyson is also an equity-minded thought leader committed to inclusive excellence and social justice.

Tali Elfassy, PhD

Dr. Tali Elfassy is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Dr. Elfassy's research is focused on the area of cardiovascular disease (specifically hypertension) and minority health. In her work, she aims to understand how complex cardiovascular disease risk factors shape health disparities among minority populations and ultimately inform prevention strategies. She received her MSPH from George Washington University, after which she worked as a Research Associate for Pfizer and then as a Research Scientist for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. It was at the New York City Health Department where she gained an interest in population health and broad-based strategies to reduce sodium intake on a population level. Dr. Elfassy went on to complete her PhD in Epidemiology at the University of Miami where she also conducted her American Heart Association postdoctoral fellowship focused on dietary sodium intake and its association with hypertension among U.S. Hispanics. Following her appointment as an assistant professor, Dr. Elfassy was awarded a University of Miami Clinical and Translational Science Institute KL2 award. Her current NIMHD K01 funding is an extension of this work and examines genetic, social, clinical, and behavioral factors that contribute to observed differences in hypertension among U.S. Hispanics. In March 2020, Dr. Elfassy was recognized by the American Heart Association as a finalist for the Sandra A Daugherty Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Disease or Hypertension Epidemiology and Prevention.

Jennifer K. Felner, PhD, MPH

Dr. Jennifer K. Felner is a core investigator and Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Institute for Behavioral and Community Health at San Diego State University. Dr. Felner received her PhD in Community Health Sciences from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2017 and her MPH in Behavioral Sciences and Health Education from Emory University in 2009. Dr. Felner is a former National Institute on Drug Abuse postdoctoral trainee and is currently pursuing an independent research agenda supported by the California Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program. In her research, Dr. Felner leverages expertise in community-based participatory research approaches, and qualitative and social epidemiological methods to elucidate and intervene on the sociostructural drivers of health inequities among communities of young people. Her research has focused on several local and national public health issues, including substance use among sexual and gender minority (SGM) young adults; barriers to LGBTQ-specific youth resource access among low-income youth of color; and homelessness and housing-related stigma among transitional-aged youth. Dr. Felner's current research aims to identify structural drivers of adolescent tobacco inequities at the intersection of SGM-status, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic position. Prior to beginning a research career, Dr. Felner worked in child advocacy and welfare in Atlanta, GA, where she developed, implemented, and evaluated community- and hospital-based child maltreatment prevention programs.

Jennifer L. Glick, PhD, MPH

Dr. Jennifer L. Glick is an Assistant Scientist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHBSPH) in the Department of Health Behavior and Society. She received her PhD in Public Health from the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, where she also earned an MPH and a graduate certificate in gender and sexuality studies. Dr. Glick has worked for over 15 years on sociostructural factors that influence health disparities, frequently HIV/AIDS-focused, particularly among multiply marginalized sexual and gender minorities and other stigmatized populations. She is motivated by a desire to improve population health nationally and globally, a pursuit of justice, interdisciplinary collaborations, and community-engaged research utilizing mixed-methods approaches. Currently, Dr. Glick is Principal Investigator of a JHU-CFAR-funded grant focused on exploring HIV risk and social support disparities between high-risk sexual minority women and their heterosexual counterparts. For this project she received the Gustav J. Martin Innovative HIV Research Award. She is also co-Investigator on two studies including: 1) The Behavioral Surveillance Research (BESURE) Study—the Baltimore participating site of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS) and 2) Communities Leveraging Evidence for Action and Resources (CLEAR)—a community-engaged initiative which seeks to identify the strengths and assets, and understand the health, social, and service needs of transgender and non-binary individuals living in and around Baltimore City.

Tamala Gondwe, PhD, MPH

Dr. Tamala Gondwe is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Epidemiology at Emory University Rollins School of Public Health. She received her PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health in the Reproductive, Perinatal, and Pediatric Epidemiology area of emphasis, and an MPH from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Dr. Gondwe's dissertation project assessed maternal factors and infant health outcomes associated with cesarean section delivery in a peri-urban population in Southern India, and her postdoctoral research focus has shifted to identifying factors contributing to persistent racial disparities in adverse maternal health outcomes. She began her postdoctoral training at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, where her research projects included analyzing whether perceived social support explains the racial disparity in postpartum visit non-attendance among women enrolled in a randomized controlled trial, and an evaluation of the construct validity and measurement invariance across race/ethnicity of psychosocial stress measures among another cohort of Medicaid-covered pregnant women. Dr. Gondwe has presented her research findings at several epidemiology and public health conferences. Her current research project includes examining the social and contextual determinants of maternal mortality in the U.S. Dr. Gondwe is interested in gaining expertise in mixed-methods research to accurately evaluate and quantify the role of psychosocial stress on racial disparities in adverse maternal outcomes, and in identifying protective factors that can be leveraged to reduce health disparities.

Candice Nicole Hargons, PhD

Dr. Candice Nicole Hargons is an Assistant Professor and Director of Master's Training in Counseling Psychology and a core faculty of the Center for Health Equity and Transformation at the University of Kentucky. She received a PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Georgia, an MS in Professional Counseling, an MEd in English Education from Georgia State University, and a BA in English from Spelman College. Dr. Hargons is an expert in sexual health and racial trauma. Her key emphasis is developing and testing the efficacy of coping strategies to prevent or reduce autonomic race-based stress reactions to prevent cardiovascular health disparities. Dr. Hargons also studies sexual pleasure among racially marginalized groups, as an expansion on how sexual health is conceptualized and measured. Most recently, Dr. Hargons pilot-tested the Black Lives Matter Meditation for Healing Racial Trauma as a facilitator of autonomic race-based stress recovery among Black students. She has found that meditation is one strategy to reduce race-based stress. Dr. Hargons has served on the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives and the Society of Counseling Psychology Executive Board. She received a Presidential Citation from APA in 2019 for her leadership and research on social justice.

Tessa Hastings, PhD

Dr. Tessa Hastings is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences at the University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy. She received her PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences from Auburn University. Dr. Hastings' research focuses on the development, implementation, and dissemination of evidence-based interventions to improve immunization coverage, specifically through pharmacy-based services in rural communities. She received an AHRQ grant (1R36HS026093-01A1) to fund her dissertation research entitled "Assessing Barriers and Increasing Use of Immunization Information Systems in Pharmacies: A Randomized Controlled Trial." This work explored Immunization Information System (IIS) use in rural community pharmacies and in a randomized controlled trial successfully improved IIS awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and enrollment in IIS. Her current research builds on this to identify, refine, and test multifaceted implementation strategies to successfully integrate IISs into the workflow of rural community pharmacies. Improving IIS use is critical to improving immunization coverage and ensuring that immunizations are provided safely and efficiently, especially in medically underserved rural communities. Her work also uses qualitative and quantitative methods to examine evidence-based interventions to improve HPV vaccine uptake among rural adolescents, pneumococcal vaccination in high-risk immunocompromised adults, and PrEP usage through addressing healthcare professionals' knowledge and HIV-related stigma. Through the implementation of effective evidence-based strategies, she hopes to contribute to the reduction of disparities in the prevention of infectious diseases.

Raquel G. Hernandez, MD, MPH

Dr. Raquel G. Hernandez an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and director of the Johns Hopkins All Children's Program in Pediatric Health Equity Research (PHER). She completed her medical degree, pediatric residency, and general academic pediatric fellowship at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, MD. She additionally completed a Master of Public Health with an emphasis on nutrition at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Clinically, Dr. Hernandez is a general academic pediatrician with expertise in primary care, underserved populations, and obesity medicine. Her early research efforts targeted understanding disparities in pediatric obesity among Latino and African-American preschoolers where she was able to describe the critical role of parental expectations surrounding early childhood growth as well as describe the influence of provider-based counseling among immigrant families with limited English proficiency. Her body of work in this field of pediatric health disparities led to the development of the PHER in 2018. In her current role as director of the PHER, she continues her work in assessing multi-level social determinants in pediatric health outcomes by leading and collaborating a diverse menu of grant-funded, multi-site projects targeting conditions including sickle cell disease, autism, pediatric obesity, and HIV. Dr. Hernandez was recently awarded an Early-Career Faculty Development Award from the Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) in light of her health equities research efforts.

Bailey Houghtaling, PhD, RDN, LDN

Dr. Bailey Houghtaling is an Assistant Professor and Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) in the School of Nutrition and Food Sciences at Louisiana State University Agricultural Center (LSU AgCenter) and the Principal Investigator of the Policy and Environmental Responses to Obesity (PAER Obesity) research group. Dr. Houghtaling's research uses social ecological and community-based frameworks, economic and marketing theories, and dissemination and implementation science approaches to investigate complex nutrition issues to inform place-based solutions with increased likelihood for public health impact. Her work focuses on mitigating obesity and noncommunicable disease disparities using policy and environmental approaches to improve food and physical activity spaces in rural communities and among at-risk populations. Dr. Houghtaling is a member of national public health working groups and is currently exploring the impact of COVID-19 on food security in Louisiana as part of a multi-institution collaboration. She earned a BS in Nutrition and Dietetics at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania in 2010, an MS in Health and Human Development and Sustainable Food Systems at Montana State University in 2015, a dietetic internship through Iowa State University in 2016, and a PhD in Community and Behavioral Science at Virginia Tech in 2019.

Larry R. Jackson II, MD, MHs

Dr. Larry R. Jackson II is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Duke University Medical Center. He received his MD from University of Florida and MHs from Duke University School of Medicine. Dr. Jackson is an adult cardiac electrophysiologist who specializes in the management of atrial arrhythmias, specifically pharmacologic and procedural rhythm control. In addition, Dr. Jackson's research interests include healthcare disparities in cardiovascular medicine, specifically racial disparities in oral anticoagulation use in patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation. His key emphasis and career development award aims are elucidating barriers and facilitators to oral anticoagulant use as a function of race, elucidating barriers and facilitators to shared decision-making in underrepresented racial and ethnic groups (UREGs) when deciding on whether to initiate systemic oral anticoagulation for prevention of stroke/systemic embolism, and creating decision support tools to assist in operationalizing shared decision-making with the goals of improving decision quality and uptake of oral anticoagulants among UREGs. Dr. Jackson's work has demonstrated that UREGs are less likely to receive oral anticoagulants compared to Caucasians for stroke prevention in patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation, and specifically, are less likely to receive direct oral anticoagulants. Dr. Jackson is on the editorial board of the Journal of Thrombosis and Thrombolysis and former recipient of the NIH Loan repayment award. Dr. Jackson is the current recipient of the Duke Reach Equity Center career development award, which aims to develop interventions aimed at addressing healthcare disparities during clinical encounters.

Elinore Kaufman, MD, MSHP

Dr. Elinore Kaufman is an Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Division of Traumatology, Surgical Critical Care, and Emergency General Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her MD from Harvard Medical School and her Master of Science in Health Policy from the University of Pennsylvania. She completed her residency in general surgery at New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center and her fellowship in surgical critical care and trauma surgery at the University of Pennsylvania. Her work is guided by a broad approach that understands injury and violence as consequences of social, economic, and environmental structures characterized by inequity. Her research focuses on building novel data sources and linkages to expand our understanding of the epidemiology of trauma and violence, the role of public policy in injury prevention, and the determinants of outcomes after trauma. Her mixed methods research on patient experiences of care after serious injury has been funded by the Bach Fund and the Penn Injury Science Center. Her work using claims data to track long-term outcomes after trauma is supported by the McCabe fund.

Sapna Kaul, PhD

Dr. Sapna Kaul is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Population Health at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. She is a health economist with primary interests in health disparities and outcomes, and healthcare cost/utilization research. Over the years, she has increasingly focused on conducting health outcomes and cost assessments for pediatric, adolescent and young adult cancer patients and survivors in the United States. She has also worked in the area of HPV prevention, especially for minority and low SES individuals. Her work is heavily focused on implementing robust econometric and statistical methods for handling complex healthcare data. Also, Dr. Kaul also has expertise in behavioral economics methods (e.g., contingent valuation) for examining individual decision-making for health-related products and services. Currently, she teaches two graduate courses: Health Policy and Management for MPH students and Health Economics for PhD students. She serves on many department and school-wide committees at UTMB.

Meirong Liu, PhD

Dr. Meirong Liu is an Associate Professor at the Howard University School of Social Work. She received her PhD in Social Work and MS in Applied Statistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Liu's research has focused on social welfare policy, access to public benefit and support services for vulnerable population, program development and program evaluations. She has a strong background in quantitative and qualitative methodology and has applied rigorous methods in research and evaluation studies. She has conducted research by analyzing national data and by collecting primary data through interviews, surveys, and observations. Dr. Liu has 18 peer-reviewed publications in leading academic journals and has presented at 28 national and international research conferences. In addition, she has been involved in several nationally-funded projects evaluating underserved population access to public programs, including health care, childcare subsidies, and other support services. Dr. Liu also studies racial and ethnic disparities in health. She has led evaluations of several federally-funded programs that established multi-institutional, comprehensive, long-term partnerships to address health disparities and improve health disparity research in underserved populations. Dr. Liu served as co-PI on an NIH P20 project to develop a collaborative research, education, and training program at an historically Black university to increase the number of underrepresented minorities participating in cancer research and practice through a long-term partnership with Johns Hopkins Cancer Center. She is also a co-Investigator on an NIH R25 project that provides training for underrepresented students and a HRSA community-based dental education grant for pediatric dentistry residents.

Andrea López-Cepero, PhD, MHSN

Dr. Andrea López-Cepero is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Nutrition Department at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She received her PhD in Clinical and Population Health Research from the University of Massachusetts Medical School, MPH in Health Sciences and Nutrition from the University of Puerto Rico-Medical Sciences campus, and BS in Cellular Molecular Biology from the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras campus. Dr. López-Cepero's research focuses on prevention of cardiometabolic conditions (mainly obesity and type 2 diabetes) in Latinos, particularly as it relates to eating behaviors, stress, and psychosocial factors. As a young scientist, she has conducted groundbreaking research that highlights how weight gain, psychological stress, and poor carbohydrate quality may be rendering Latinos to a greater metabolic disadvantage and risk of type 2 diabetes. She has also conducted pioneering work on emotional eating in Latinos that have concluded that emotional eating is associated with food insecurity, overeating, energy-dense foods, and cardiometabolic diseases (i.e., obesity, type 2 diabetes) in this group. Her work in this novel field has been recognized multiple times by the American Society for Nutrition. Dr. López-Cepero is a strong advocate for minority health and health equity, and for this she has been recently recognized as one of the El Mundo Boston Latino 30 under 30.

Paula Lozano, PhD

Dr. Paula Lozano is an epidemiologist at Sinai Urban Health Institute's Health Equity and Assessment Research strategy. She received her PhD at the University of South Carolina in 2016. Dr. Lozano is a behavioral scientist and social epidemiologist with extensive training in epidemiologic methods, including advanced analytic techniques. Her research focuses on how social and psychosocial risk factors influence cigarette and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) use. During her PhD training, Dr. Lozano authored and co-authored several manuscripts that examined the relationship between smoking social norms and smoking-related stigma with cigarette use among adults from Mexico and Uruguay. In her postdoctoral research, she examined the social and psychosocial risk factors associated with ENDS and cigarette use among adolescents and adults in Mexico. Through this research, she published several papers using cross-sectional and longitudinal data analysis. Dr. Lozano's recent work examines disparities in adult cigarette use by race/ethnicity in diverse communities in Chicago. Dr. Lozano's research suggests that patterns of tobacco use differ by Hispanic/Latinx background, with Puerto Ricans smoking at disproportionately higher rates compared to Mexicans. Most recently, Dr. Lozano, research has also focused on understanding the relationship between acculturation and mental health among Hispanics/Latinos from diverse ethnic backgrounds using data from the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos (HCHS/SOL).

Cherlie Magny-Normilus, PhD, FNP-BC

Dr. Magny-Normilus is a Research Scholar at the Boston College Willian F. Connell School of Nursing. She is a family nurse practitioner who received her PhD in Nursing with an emphasis in Health Promotion from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Additionally, Dr. Magny-Normilus completed a two-year T32-funded postdoctoral fellowship in Self and Family Management of Complex Chronic Illness at the Yale School of Nursing. Her program of research focuses on reducing health disparities among minority and vulnerable populations, particularly immigrants, with a current emphasis on Haitian immigrants with type 2 diabetes (T2D). Her work has revealed that Haitian immigrants have unique genetic characteristics, cultural backgrounds, and migration experiences relative to comparable ethnic groups. Dr. Magny-Normilus aims to enhance healthy behaviors as a mechanism to lower the prevalence of T2D-related complications. Dr. Magny-Normilus is currently working on characterizing self-management behaviors, barriers to self-management of T2D, and glycemic targets to develop novel interventions for adult Haitian immigrants. She will explore the association between migration and self-management science on glycemic control outcomes. Dr. Magny-Normilus has received key honors and awards, including being selected as a 2014 nurse.com Regional GEM Awards Program finalist, and was inducted in 2015 to the Haitian Roundtable's 1804 List of Changemakers. Dr. Magny-Normilus was recognized by the Haitian Government Office of the Ministry of Haitians Living Abroad in 2016, to honor her Dedication and Contributions to the Advancement of Nursing Education throughout Haiti, and she was awarded the Aesclepius Medical Society (AMS) Humanitarian Award in 2019.

Alexandra Main, PhD

Dr. Alexandra Main is an Assistant Professor of Psychological Sciences at the University of California, Merced. She received her PhD in Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Main is a developmental psychologist and an expert on social and emotional development of children and adolescents. Her work focuses on parent-child interactions within at-risk samples, including families of color/immigrant families, adolescent mothers, and families coping with chronic illness. Her key emphasis is on the role of culture in family dynamics. Methodologically, she uses observational methods and dynamic statistical techniques to examine temporal contingencies between parent and child behaviors and the implications of these dynamics for mental and physical health. Most recently, Dr. Main is studying how relationship dynamics between Latina adolescent mothers and their own caregivers are predictive of mothers' mental health and their children's social and cognitive development. She is also part of a team working with the NICHD Early Head Start dataset to determine how race/ethnicity and family stress in early life predict discourse styles in early adolescence. Dr. Main serves on the editorial board for Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology and the Journal of Research on Adolescence and has chaired the Moral Development Pre-Conference at the Society for Research in Child Development and the Society for Research on Adolescence for the past three years.

Erika Marquez, PhD, MPH

Dr. Erika Marquez is an Assistant Professor for the School of Public Health at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She received her PhD in Public Health with a focus in Social Behavioral Health and a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her research focus is health disparities with an emphasis on the built environment and system-level influences that result in health inequities. She has devoted the last decade of her career to housing quality, housing-related health concerns, and housing equity. Specifically, she has examined the impact of lead as an environmental hazard in children through interventions to improve housing conditions, utilized surveillance data to inform public policy, and has studied how housing quality serves as a direct pathway to displacement and housing instability. Dr. Marquez is currently working on implementing different behavioral change models and theories to increase provider adherence to blood lead screening guidelines. She is conducting a preliminary study of pesticide exposure in pregnant women that will increase our understanding of the neurodevelopmental outcomes in children as a result of exposure in utero. Dr. Marquez is Vice-Chair of the Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition and APHA Affiliate Representative for the Nevada Public Health Association. In 2019, she was appointed to serve on the Lead Exposure and Prevention Advisory Committee (LEPAC) for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help guide federal programs and services, review and identify best practices, identify research needs, and identify effective services for communities affected by lead exposure and lead poisoning.

Juliette McClendon, PhD

Dr. Juliette McClendon is a Research Psychologist in the Women's Health Sciences Division of the National Center for PTSD at VA Boston and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine. She received her PhD in Psychology from Washington University in St. Louis and a BA in Psychology from Harvard University. She completed her postdoctoral training at VA Boston as an Advanced Women's Health Fellow. Dr. McClendon is a clinical psychologist who studies the impact of stress on racial/ethnic disparities in health. Her key focuses are the role of racism and discrimination in shaping racial/ethnic mental health disparities and the identification of intervention approaches that can mitigate the impact of racism-related stress and trauma on health. Dr. McClendon's work has demonstrated that experiences of discrimination contribute to health disparities at the intersections of race, ethnicity and gender. Dr. McClendon is currently funded by a two-year VA Career Development Award to evaluate an innovative intervention that targets racism-related stress and trauma to improve health and treatment engagement among Veterans of Color, as well as barriers and facilitators to its implementation within the VA. Dr. McClendon serves as the Psychology Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator for VA Boston and was a member of the Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology (SSCP; American Psychological Association Division 12, Section III) Diversity Committee. Her dissertation research was supported by an NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award. In 2016, she was awarded the first SSCP Outstanding Student Diversity Research Award.

Lisa McElroy, MD, MS

Dr. Lisa McElroy is an Assistant Professor of Abdominal Transplant Surgery at Duke University. She received her MD from Michigan State University and a Master of Science in Health Services and Outcomes Research from Northwestern University. She completed her clinical fellowship in abdominal transplant surgery at the University of Michigan. Her research has examined how processes in care affect clinical outcomes of complex surgical patients, as well as dissemination of engineering-based methods such as fault tree analysis and failure modes and effects analysis for assessment and improvement of surgical care. Dr. McElroy's recent work focuses on identification of bias in healthcare systems processes that lead to disparities in access to solid organ transplant. Her current work examines the influence of center-level barriers on racial disparities in living donor kidney transplantation. Her long-term interests are in the development and dissemination of best practices in transplant surgery and improving the quality and equity of transplant care for underrepresented and disadvantaged populations with end stage organ disease. She is a 2020 American Journal of Transplantation Editorial Fellow and a 2020 recipient of the Duke Center for Research to Advance Healthcare Equity Career Development Award.

Scott J. Mendelson, PhD, MD

Dr. Scott J. Mendelson is Assistant Professor of Neurology, Chief Quality Officer, and Director of Teleneurology in the Department of Neurology at the University of Chicago. He earned a PhD in Neurobiology from University of Chicago and an MD from the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine. Dr. Mendelson is a neurologist with subspecialty training in vascular neurology from the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University. Dr. Mendelson is a health services researcher with expertise in systems of acute stroke care. His research interests include developing strategies to reduce delay in emergency room care and interhospital transfers of stroke patients. His research has revealed racial disparities in providing informed consent for tPA, a medicine that treats acute ischemic stroke. Dr. Mendelson is developing decision aids to improve the informed consent process for tPA. Dr. Mendelson was previously the NINDS StrokeNET Research Fellow at Northwestern University and a recipient of an AHRQ F32 award to study disparities in stroke care.

Roxanne Mirabal-Beltran, PhD, RN

Dr. Roxanne Mirabal-Beltran is an Assistant Professor of Nursing at the Georgetown University School of Nursing & Health Studies. She received her PhD in Population, Family, and Reproductive Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore and an MS in Health Leadership and Management from the University of Maryland School of Nursing, Baltimore. Dr. Mirabal-Beltran began working with DC healthcare organizations addressing health disparities in 1995, first with Zacchaeus Free Clinic and later with La Clínica del Pueblo. In 1999, she earned a degree in Nursing and, until December of 2019, worked as a Registered Nurse in Women's Health at the Medstar Washington Hospital Center in DC. Dr. Mirabal-Beltran's research focuses on Hispanic/Latinx health inequities and disparities, specifically on the intersection of provider-patient communication and the ethnicity/race, education, language concordance, and nativity of both healthcare providers and patients. Her work to date has revealed racial and ethnic disparities in patient-provider communication concerning repeat cesarean births, and the need for additional provider support in the area of pre-conception counseling for women living with HIV/AIDS. Currently, Dr. Mirabal-Beltran is exploring Hispanic and non-Hispanic women's perceptions of neural tube defect prevention with a focus on prenatal patient-provider communication and education.

Brittany N. Morey, PhD, MPH

Dr. Brittany N. Morey is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health, Society, and Behavior at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Program in Public Health. She received her MPH and PhD in Community Health Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles. Previously, she was a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Morey's research focuses on how structural inequity contributes to health inequities. She has expertise in how neighborhood social and physical environments contribute to health disparities among underserved populations, including Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and immigrants. Her work also examines the social determinants of health for immigrants and their U.S.-born children and grandchildren. For her community-based research on environmental injustices experienced by Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, Dr. Morey received the Don T. Nakanishi Award for Outstanding Engaged Scholarship in Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies at UCLA. In 2017, she received the UCLA Community Health Sciences Best Research Project Award for her research on community-level anti-immigrant prejudice and mortality. The same year, she received the Fielding School of Public Health Dean's Outstanding Student Award. Currently, Dr. Morey is a co-Investigator on an NCI grant (1R01CA230440-01A1) to examine how ethnic enclaves affect breast cancer outcomes for Asian American and Hispanic women. She is also currently funded by the UCI Institute for Clinical and Translational Science to conduct pilot research on how neighborhood social environments and environmental air toxicants affect respiratory health for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander subpopulations.

S. Michelle Ogunwole, MD

Dr. S. Michelle Ogunwole is a general Internal Medicine research fellow and PhD Candidate at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She received her MD from University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Dr. Ogunwole is a health disparities researcher, social epidemiologist, and general internal medicine physician specializing in the care of women with chronic medical conditions. She has advanced training in Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Science. Her research is focused on racial disparities in maternal health outcomes among African American women. Specifically, she is interested in four main topics: 1) The role of the general internist in optimizing chronic medical conditions in the preconception period, 2) Postpartum chronic disease and long-term health outcomes related to complications of pregnancy, particularly for women with gestational diabetes, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, or excessive gestational weight gain, 3) African American women's experience with the healthcare system (specifically their experiences of racial discrimination) and barriers to primary care follow up after pregnancy, and 4) Creating equitable, community driven quality improvement interventions around transitions of care from obstetrics to primary care for racial/ethnic minorities who experience medically complicated pregnancies. Dr. Ogunwole also has an active role in medical education. She serves on the Association of American Medical Colleges Quality Improvement and Patient Safety competencies working group, where she worked extensively on the health and healthcare equity domain of the recently published quality improvement and patient safety education competencies.

Hyunsung Oh, PhD

Dr. Hyunsung Oh is an Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work and a Faculty Affiliate at the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center at Arizona State University. He received a PhD in Social Work from the University of Southern California and an MSW in Social Work from Yonsei University in South Korea. Dr. Oh has focused on understanding social determinants of health to address health disparities that have disproportionately undermined the well-being of underserved groups, including Latinx patients, and other groups, with chronic illness and mental comorbidities (e.g., persons with mental illnesses) that seek care from community health centers. Dr. Oh's scholarship has contributed to understanding of social determinants of health and health disparities by finding ways to leverage data related to social context and social networks. He is currently focusing on health disparities research to unravel the sociocultural mechanisms by which attributes of social context (e.g., social support) are associated with health and access to care among individuals from underserved groups. In response to emerging health disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Oh leads an interdisciplinary team to understand social determinants of health underpinning disparities in access to COVID-19 testing and treatments. Dr. Oh was awarded a pilot study funding from Investigator Development Core supported by NIMHD (2U54 MD002316) and served as Academic Fellow of Knowledge Exchange for Resiliency acknowledging his community-embedded research.

Lillian Polanco-Roman, PhD

Dr. Lillian Polanco-Roman is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at The New School for Social Research. She received a PhD in Clinical Psychology at The Graduate Center, City University of New York and an MA in Psychology at Hunter College, City University of New York. Dr. Polanco-Roman is a licensed clinical psychologist and an expert on the impact of culture-specific factors on developmental psychopathology in racial/ethnic minority and immigrant youth. Her key focus is clarifying mechanisms underlying the development of psychiatric disorders and suicide risk in a sociocultural context. Dr. Polanco-Roman also studies the intersecting areas of cultural-specific factors and neurocognitive processes. Her research has broadened our understanding of the harmful effects of experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination as well as the promotive effects of racial/ethnic identity on suicidal thoughts and behaviors, which has important implications for the development of more culturally sensitive youth suicide preventive and intervention strategies. Most recently, Dr. Polanco-Roman is implementing an intergenerational framework to identify early behavioral and neurocognitive markers for suicidal behaviors among high-risk individuals with parental history of suicidal behaviors in an ethnic minority group from disadvantaged background. Dr. Polanco-Roman was a T32 Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Translational Research in Child Psychiatric Disorders program in the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University (NIMH) as well as a Predoctoral Research Fellow in the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement program at City University of New York (NIGMS).

Nicolette W. Powe, DrPH, MS, MCHES®

Dr. Nicolette Warren Powe is Assistant Professor of Public Health in the Department of Health Professions at Youngstown State University. She received a DrPH in Health Education from the Loma Linda University, an MS in Health Promotion/Human Sciences from North Carolina Central University, and a BS in Community Health Education/Healthcare Ethics from Kent State University. Dr. Powe is a public health scientist whose primary interest is behavioral risk factors for chronic disease prevention. Dr. Powe's research investigates racial/ethnic and sex differences in adherence to cardiometabolic self-management practices, specifically in young adults. Dr. Powe also studies applied health education theories to implementation of health promotion programs and dissemination of chronic disease program outcomes. Dr. Powe's work has resulted in the publication of the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) Minority National Organizations (MNO) Success Stories showcasing the health equity projects that worked towards closing the health disparity gap in at least one of the racial and ethnic minority groups. Dr. Powe serves on the Youngstown American Heart Association Board and the Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio Board. She was elected to the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) Board of Trustees for Professional Development.

Christopher Prener, PhD

Dr. Christopher Prener is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Saint Louis University, where he is affiliated with both the Institute for Healing Justice and Equity and the Advanced HEAlth Data (AHEAD) Research Institute. He received his PhD in Sociology from Northeastern University, where he remains affiliated with the Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research. Dr. Prener is an urban and medical sociologist with an interest in mixed methods research designs that incorporate spatial data. He is finishing a book manuscript entitled Medicine at the Margins, which focuses on how the Emergency Medical Service system is defined by marginality—from the wider health care system, in the unpredictable and often tedious nature of the work itself, and in its role as part of a crumbling social safety net. Dr. Prener is also a long-time collaborator on a large, multi-continent investigation of literacy and mental illness. Dr. Prener's current research focuses on the impact that population decline, redlining, and segregation have had on St. Louis, Missouri across a number of outcomes, including vacancy, crime, and poor health. In addition to pursuing these questions, Dr. Prener actively maintains several open source software projects that make spatial research more reproducible and St. Louis data more accessible.

JaNelle Ricks, DrPH, MPA

Dr. JaNelle Ricks is an Assistant Professor at The Ohio State University College of Public Health. She earned a DrPH at the University of Kentucky School of Public Health in 2013 and a Master of Public Administration from Ohio University in 2010. She was an NIH IRACDA postdoctoral fellow at Emory University prior to accepting her current position at Ohio State. Since becoming active in public health in 2008, she has been involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating cross-sectional and prospective studies in rural tobacco control policy, cancer prevention and control, childhood stress and trauma, and HIV/STD/unintended pregnancy prevention for youth and young adult populations in rural and urban settings. Her current research addresses sexual and reproductive health issues among adolescent/young adult, racial/ethnic and sexual minority populations. Dr. Ricks examines the intersection of individual, social, and environmental determinants of health, with particular emphasis on health disparities. Her research is rooted in the extensive use of both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to promote healthy outcomes at the population level.

Jorge A. Rodriguez, MD

Dr. Jorge A. Rodriguez is an Instructor in Medicine at Harvard Medical School and a hospitalist-researcher at Brigham and Women's Hospital. He received his MD from Tufts University School of Medicine. He completed his internal medicine training at Massachusetts General Hospital and went on to complete a clinical informatics fellowship at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC). Dr. Rodriguez is a clinician informaticist whose research focuses on the meaningful intersection of medicine, social justice, and technology. His work focuses on addressing digital divides in patient-facing health technologies, including patient portals, mobile apps, and telemedicine. Dr. Rodriguez aims to develop patient-facing interfaces for chronic disease management that are accessible to patients with a diversity of literacy, numeracy, and language needs. Dr. Rodriguez's work has highlighted the importance of technology access and user-centered design in making technology accessible to underserved patients, especially limited English proficient (LEP) patients. He seeks to understand how implementation science methods can promote digital health equity. In recognition of his work, he was the recipient of the inaugural Minority Faculty Research Award at BIDMC to understand the experience of LEP patients in the digital space. Dr. Rodriguez's work is informed by his active clinical practice as hospitalist in Boston, MA.

Youssef Roman, PharmD, PhD

Dr. Youssef Roman is an Assistant Professor of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science in the School of Pharmacy at Virginia Commonwealth University. He received his Doctor of Pharmacy from Oregon State University and his PhD from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Roman's research has focused on elucidating the prevalence of genetic risk factors of cardiometabolic disorders across different racial minorities using a community-based genetics research approach. Also, his research has been interrogating the effect of genetic variabilities in CYP450 enzymes and kidney transporters on the response to medications in minority populations. Currently, Dr. Roman's research focuses on the role of uric acid as it intersects the risk of developing gout, cardiometabolic disorders, and neurodegenerative diseases. In addition to characterizing sources of variability in response to drugs, Dr. Roman's research also focuses on developing tools to improve the diversity in genetic studies by studying populations that are historically underrepresented in biomedical research. The overall goals of Dr. Roman's research are twofold: first, to reduce the health disparities of cardiometabolic disorders among minorities and second, to develop evidence-based tools for using a precision medicine approach that moves us beyond the trial and error approach or the one-genotype-fits-all framework to minimize the risk of developing major drug adverse events. Dr. Roman was awarded the Young Investigator Award (2018 and 2019) from the Gout, Hyperuricemia, and Crystal-Associated Disease Network (G-CAN). Additionally, Dr. Roman was selected for the 2020 Butler-Williams Scholars Program by the National Institute on Aging.

Nicole Rosendale, MD

Dr. Nicole Rosendale is Assistant Professor of Neurology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). She received a BA in Comparative Literature from Smith College and an MD from New York University School of Medicine before completing residency and fellowship at UCSF. Dr. Rosendale joined the Neurohospitalist Division of UCSF in 2017 upon completion of her fellowship, and predominantly attends on the teaching service at San Francisco General Hospital, the city's safety-net hospital and only Level 1 trauma center. Her clinical expertise encompasses the acute manifestations of neurologic disease, including cerebrovascular disease, neuroinfectious disease, and the neurologic manifestations of systemic illness. In addition to her clinical duties, Dr. Rosendale is dedicated to advancing health equity in neurology through research and education, particularly in regard to LGBTQ+ health. Her work has highlighted the importance of LGBTQ+ health in neurology, educated around caring for transgender individuals in the acute setting and, most recently, exposed discrepancies between self-reported competence in caring for LGBTQ+ individuals and LGBTQ+ health knowledge in U.S. neurologists. Dr. Rosendale is currently investigating other neurodisparities in LGBTQ+ individuals, including in stroke, multiple sclerosis, and migraine, with the goal of informing culturally appropriate interventions to improve brain health in this community. Dr. Rosendale serves as the Chair of the LGBTQI Section of the American Academy of Neurology and as a co-Editor for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion website for Neurology.

Farzana Saleem, PhD

Dr. Farzana Saleem is a University of California Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles. She has a joint appointment in the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior and the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, with affiliation in the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies. Dr. Saleem will be transitioning to an Assistant Professor faculty position at Stanford University in Graduate School of Education. She received her PhD in the Clinical-Community Psychology doctoral program at the George Washington University and completed a child and adolescent clinical internship, with a specialization in trauma, at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Dr. Saleem conducts community and school-based research focused on identifying factors across contexts that can reduce the negative effects of racial stress and trauma on the psychological health, academic success, and adjustment of African American adolescents and families. She uses a strengths-based lens to understand the benefits of ethnic-racial socialization and other culturally relevant factors in families and schools. She is interested in conducting empirical research and creating tools and interventions focused on reducing racial stress, eradicating mental health and academic racial disparities, and promoting the well-being of marginalized and racially diverse youth, families, and communities.
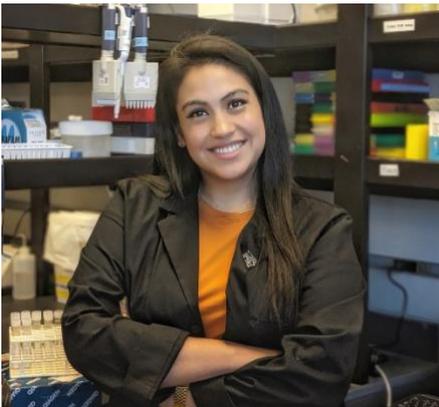
Cathy Samayoa, PhD

Dr. Cathy Samayoa is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology at San Francisco State University. She received a PhD in Cancer Biology from University of Texas Health San Antonio and an MS in Cell and Molecular Biology from San Francisco State University. Dr. Samayoa investigates health disparities among Latina breast cancer survivors. She is examining the effects of an RCT stress management intervention on biomarkers of stress, premature aging, and resilience. Her research aims to better understand the impact of stress and sleep on breast cancer health disparities and to examine the reciprocal and longitudinal relationships between biological and behavioral measures of stress, sleep, and mental health. Dr. Samayoa is also focused on increasing the participation of Latinas—and other vulnerable populations—in clinical and biomedical research. With community and academic partners, she developed participant-centered strategies for overcoming barriers to biospecimen collection among rural Spanish-speaking Latina breast cancer survivors. Ultimately, her goal is to launch a multidisciplinary, independent research career focused on understanding the interplay of biological and psychological mechanisms, how those biobehavioral processes may impact health disparities, and identifying corresponding points of intervention.

Cleo A. Samuel, PhD

Dr. Cleo A. Samuel is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the University of North Carolina, Gillings School of Global Public Health. Currently, she is Principal Investigator of Symptom and Healthcare Access Reporting and Evaluation (SHARE) for Supportive Care Equity, a five-year NCI-funded K01 study focused on understanding and addressing inequities in symptom management among cancer patients. As part of the SHARE study, Dr. Samuel and her team are analyzing data from the UNC Health Registry/Cancer Survivorship Cohort to inform the development of a novel electronic patient-reported outcome tool designed to routinely monitor symptoms and symptom-relevant health care access challenges during cancer treatment. As a health services researcher with expertise in cancer care inequities, palliative and supportive care, and health informatics, she is particularly interested in disentangling the multilevel sources (i.e., patient-, provider-, and health care system-level) of disparities in palliative and supportive cancer care using mixed methods (i.e., quantitative and qualitative data analysis), and addressing such inequities through system-level approaches that leverage health informatics tools.

Mechelle Sanders, PhD

Dr. Mechelle Sanders is an Instructor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Rochester. She received a PhD in Health Services Research from the University of Rochester and a BA in Psychology and Sociology from Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Sanders is a health services researcher whose work is focused on studying the implications of low health literacy on cardiovascular disease outcomes. Dr. Sanders also studies the role of lay health workers and their potential to mitigate health disparities among patients with low-health literacy. Dr. Sanders's work has revealed lay health workers can improve disease knowledge among low-health literacy patients and there is potential for broadening the function of lay health workers in the health care continuum. Most recently, Dr. Sanders was selected to be a fellow in the University of California San Francisco's Research and Implementation Science for Equity (RISE) program, sponsored by NHLBI Programs to Increase Diversity Among Individuals Engaged in Health-Related Research (PRIDE) in 2019.

Ednalise Santiago Cartagena, PhD

Dr. Ednalise Santiago is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the School of Pharmacy at the University of Puerto Rico-Medical Sciences Campus. She received her PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine. Dr. Santiago is a microbiologist/ biochemist, broadly skilled in molecular biology, genetics, and proteomics. She is currently expanding her knowledge in human molecular genetics, pharmacogenomics, pharmacoproteomics, bioinformatics, clinical, and translational sciences. Dr. Santiago is interested in better understanding the genomic, proteomic, and metabolomic basis of observed phenotype variability among Latinos. The goal of her current postdoctoral research is to study cardiovascular health disparities in a Caribbean Hispanic population to provide a precision medicine guided approach that improves the actual therapy in those patients. More specifically, she is interested in the identification of novel biomarkers in Caribbean Hispanic cardiovascular patients with resistance to clopidogrel using GWAS, gene expression, and quantitative proteomic approaches. Her long-term goal is to become a translational investigator with the expertise to provide advancing precision medicine-driven guidance for clinical decision making in underrepresented Hispanics.

Mellanie V. Springer, MD, MS

Dr. Mellanie V. Springer is an Assistant Professor of Neurology at the University of Michigan Medical School. Dr. Springer specializes in vascular neurology. Her research interests are in racial and ethnic disparities in stroke treatment/outcomes and social determinants of health. Dr. Springer received her bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto. She completed a master's degree in cognitive neuroscience at the University of Toronto. She earned her medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in 2009. Dr. Springer then completed her medicine internship, neurology residency, and vascular neurology training at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, NY. She joined the faculty of Montefiore Medical Center as an assistant professor of neurology in 2014. As a junior faculty member at Montefiore, she completed a master's degree in clinical research methods. Dr. Springer joined the faculty of the University of Michigan Medical School in 2018. Dr. Springer has peer-reviewed publications on cognition and aging, subarachnoid hemorrhage, and racial and ethnic disparities in stroke treatment. As an NIMHD diversity supplement awardee, she is currently researching and developing stroke education tools with the objective of achieving health equity in stroke care.

Jessica Stern, MD, MS

Dr. Jessica Stern is an Assistant Professor in the Divisions of Pediatric Allergy and Immunology, and Allergy, Immunology, and Rheumatology at The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry in Rochester, NY. She graduated from Bowdoin College and received an MD from The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, where she stayed to complete her Combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics residency training, Allergy and Immunology Fellowship, as well as a master's degree in Clinical Investigation. Her research interests include the intersection of public health and allergic disease, including health care disparities and drug allergy. Her current research projects include identifying gaps in asthma in allergy care in Rochester, NY where the poverty rate is 32.6%, contributing to wide disparities in asthma outcomes among the region's Black and Latinx communities. Dr. Stern is a consultant and contributes to NHLBI-funded, school-based asthma programs to incorporate assessment and access to specialty asthma and allergy care among children with moderate to severe asthma. Her initial work has found that multiple cohorts of school children with asthma have reports of allergic disease that is under-recognized and undertreated, which may lead to worse asthma outcomes. Her career goals are to reduce health care disparities in asthma by integrating systems that address co-morbid allergic conditions, environmental triggers, and social determinants of health. She is working to create an integrated, multi-disciplinary, community-based intervention to address the influence of comorbid allergic disease on asthma outcomes.

Taren Swindle, PhD

Dr. Taren Swindle is an Assistant Professor in Family and Preventive Medicine within the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Broadly, her research program focuses on understanding and improving health and developmental outcomes for children impacted by poverty. Dr. Swindle has a particular focus on obesity prevention and nutrition promotion for young children in families with limited income. Her work to date has focused on the early childcare setting as a key context for obesity prevention and nutrition intervention. She is interested in increasing adoption of evidence-based practices and interventions in community settings such as this through application of implementation science. She received her PhD in Educational Psychology and Research from the University of Memphis. At present, Dr. Swindle is in the final 6 months of her K01 Career Development Award from NIDDK. This award has provided Dr. Swindle with training in community engagement, community nutrition, and implementation science. In addition, she currently holds an NIDDK R03 award focused on de-implementation of detrimental feeding practices in childcare as well as an NCI R21 designed to assess factors associated with sustainment of nutrition and physical activity programming in childcare. Her aim for the next phase of her career is to apply the concepts and methods of implementation science to the study of health equity in nutrition-related health outcomes, leveraging effective implementation approaches to reduce health disparities in the early years of life.

Tze-Woei Tan, MD, MPH, FACS

Dr. Tze-Woei Tan is an Assistant Professor of Surgery for the University of Arizona College of Medicine and a core faculty for the Southern Arizona Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA). After receiving an MD from the University of Melbourne, he completed general surgery training at Brown University and vascular surgery fellowship at Boston University. In May 2020, he also completed a Master of Public Health with a concentration in health promotion at the University of Arizona. Dr. Tan is a board-certified vascular surgeon, and his clinical practice focuses on limb salvage in patients with diabetes and peripheral artery disease. His long-term goals are to understand and design interventions to reduce disparities of lower extremity amputations in vulnerable populations. Dr. Tan recently received a K23 Career Development Award from NIDDK in September 2019. He is leveraging the diverse clinical environment at the SALSA—the primary referral center for complex diabetic foot problems and limb salvage—to study the determinants of lower extremity amputations among Hispanics and Native Americans with foot ulcerations.

Fanita Amincia Tyrell, PhD

Dr. Fanita Amincia Tyrell is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota. Starting in Fall 2020, Dr. Tyrell will join the faculty at the University of Maryland, College Park as an Assistant Professor in Developmental Psychology. She received her PhD in Developmental Psychology with a minor in quantitative methods from the University of California, Riverside. Her research program seeks to elucidate processes of risk and resilience among ethnic-racial minority and adversity-exposed populations as they operate within broader cultural contexts. In particular, she is interested in understanding how cultural experiences, such as cultural socialization and parenting practices, influence development and strengthen pathways to typical and atypical patterns of behavior. Ultimately, the goal of her research is to refine existing theoretical models of risk and resilience, develop and improve methods and measures that will capture the nuanced experiences of vulnerable youth, and inform culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate intervention programs aimed at promoting positive adaptation and resilience in disadvantaged youth and their families. Her research and scholarship have been supported by the Ford Foundation and the National Institute of Mental Health.

Anibal J. Valentín-Acevedo, PhD

Dr. Aníbal J. Valentín-Acevedo is an Assistant Professor at Universidad Central del Caribe Medical School in Bayamón, Puerto Rico. He earned a BS from the University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla and a PhD in Molecular Biosciences with an emphasis in molecular immunology from Rutgers University-Piscataway. After finishing his PhD, Dr. Valentín transitioned into the Biotechnology sector and worked as a postdoctoral research scientist at Humigen in Hamilton, N.J. and later completed a certificate program in Pharmaceutical and Clinical Trials Management, also from Rutgers University. In 2013, Dr. Valentín moved back to his native Puerto Rico and joined the University of Puerto Rico where he taught immunology and became a mentor to many underrepresented minority students interested in science. In 2016, he started at his current position, in which he studies signaling pathways in immune cells in response to viral antigens and teaches medical and graduate immunology. He is also the Program Coordinator of the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement at his institution. Being an underrepresented minority and having experienced many of the disparities that affect Latinos, Dr. Valentin became interested in contributing, through his research, to the reduction of these inequalities. He is currently developing a research project that aims to study the relationship between biological factors and hormone therapy in Hispanic-transgender individuals. Dr. Valentín is a member of the American Association of Immunologists, where he also served as a Public Policy Fellow. He is an art enthusiast and a passionate science advocate.

Melissa Ward-Peterson, PhD, MPH

Dr. Melissa Ward-Peterson is a Postdoctoral Associate at the Community-Based Research Institute at Florida International University. She received a PhD in Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology from Florida International University (FIU) and an MPH in Global Health Policy from George Washington University (GW). A social epidemiologist by training, her research interests include the social determinants of health and health disparities, with a particular focus on women-centered care for opioid use disorder and HIV. She is currently the Principal Investigator on a mixed-methods pilot project funded by FIU's Research Center in a Minority Institution that is examining barriers to medication-assisted treatment for women with opioid use disorder through in-depth interviews conducted with women in recovery and providers, as well as an analysis of emergency medical services data. She is also currently a co-Investigator on two R01 projects examining women-centered care and patient-centered care for retention in HIV care and viral suppression. Her previous research has examined risky sexual behavior among young women in Malawi, as well as the development of provider training modules for non-directive pregnancy options counseling. In 2017, she received the FIU Stempel College Path Science Prize, and from 2016-2017, she participated in FIU's inaugural Presidential Leadership Program. She has extensive experience in health equity research and program management and has provided technical support for numerous projects sponsored by federal and international agencies, including the NIH, HRSA, Department of State, World Health Organization, UNAIDS, and the World Bank.
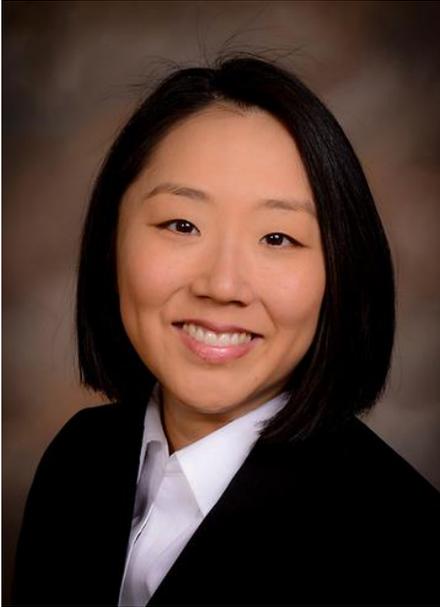
Jennifer Woo, PhD, CNM/WHNP, FACNM

Dr. Jennifer Woo is an Assistant Professor at Texas Woman's University in the College of Nursing. She received her PhD in Nursing Science from Loyola University Chicago and both her bachelor's degree in nursing and master's degree in nursing science as a certified nurse-midwife (CNM) and women's health nurse practitioner (WHNP) from the University of Pennsylvania. Her work has focused on the impact of maternal vitamin D deficiency (VDD) on maternal child health outcomes such as preterm birth in Black and Hispanic women. She focused her dissertation on associations of maternal VDD and symptoms such as fatigue, poor sleep quality and physical quality of life. She seeks to expand her research to understand the impact of genetic variants of important genes related to vitamin D metabolism and its impact on pregnancy outcomes. Her clinical practice as a Certified Nurse Midwife encompasses caring for pregnant women in the maternal fetal medicine clinic and intrapartum care at Parkland Memorial Hospital. Dr. Woo has been recognized by her professional organization, American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) as an expert in the profession and inducted as a fellow in May 2019.

Lindsay Young, PhD

Dr. Lindsay Young (she/her/hers) is an Assistant Professor in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California. Her works sits at the intersection of public health, social networks, and communication studies and focuses on the social contexts that contribute to and/or facilitate health disparities, access to critical health resources, and health behavior change in underserved, resource-restricted populations. Her current research, supported by a Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00) funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), focuses on the contextual factors that affect HIV prevention engagement among young racial and sexual minorities. Dr. Young's work is also driven by a praxis orientation, governed by a desire to help affected communities leverage the power of their organic networks toward improved community health. To these ends, she draws on community-oriented, asset-based models of community development and social network theories of health behavior change to design community health interventions that privilege intrinsic structures and assets. Her work has been published in top-tier, peer-reviewed journals across multiple research domains such as Social Science & Medicine, AIDS and Behavior, Clinical Trials, Preventive Medicine Reports, Social Networks, and Network Science. Prior to joining USC, she was a Postdoctoral Scholar at the Chicago Center for HIV Elimination at the University of Chicago. She earned her PhD from the School of Communication at Northwestern University in 2014.

Shuo Vivien Zhou, PhD

Dr. Shuo Vivien Zhou is an Assistant Professor of Community and Behavioral Health at the Colorado School of Public Health. She is a member of the University of Colorado Cancer Center and the mHealth Impact lab. She received her PhD in Communication from Cornell University. As a researcher long immersed in health communication and cognitive psychology, Dr. Zhou's research expertise lies in developing and evaluating innovative mobile technology-based interventions and theory-based communication strategies for cancer prevention and reducing cancer disparities. Focusing on emerging digital technologies, Dr. Zhou explores how mobile phone applications and immersive virtual reality could be designed to effectively collect health data, convey health information, facilitate health behavior change, and promote public health policies. Dr. Zhou also investigates the persuasive effects of various communication strategies and the psychological mechanisms of how people respond to health-related messages, including using narratives to reduce psychological reactance and unconscious health goal activation and contagion, especially among socioeconomically disadvantaged populations and ethnic minorities. Dr. Zhou's work on the role of "personalization" in health communication revealed that different strategies should be used to promote community-level changes versus individual behavioral changes. Most recently, Dr. Zhou has developed and pilot tested an immersive VR intervention to deliver cue exposure and meditation therapy to help low-SES smokers quit smoking.

Justina Žurauskienė, PhD

Dr. Justina Žurauskienė is a BRIDGE fellow in the area of Population Dynamics and Women's Health at the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA and Centre for Computational Biology, University of Birmingham, UK. She received her PhD in Computational Biology from Imperial College London, UK and postdoctoral training in Statistical Genomics at the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics, University of Oxford, UK. Dr Žurauskienė's research is broadly focused on development of new computational tools to address challenges posed by large-scale and high-dimensional data (e.g., omic data, time series). Current methodological applications are focusing on women's health research, in particular maternal health studies. In the past, Dr. Žurauskienė's research was concerned with modelling metabolic processes at the single cell level; developing tools for single cell data analysis using Bayesian non-parametric methods; developing clustering algorithms for data integration and hierarchical modelling. Currently, she is collaborating with Champaign-Urbana Public Health District on health disparity research that investigates the birth and death disparities across residents of Champaign County using electronic birth and death records. She also leads a study in collaboration with CUPHD WIC clinic, investigating maternal metabolic health disparities with the aim to identify molecular mechanisms driving gestational diabetes in health disparity populations. In addition to mentoring undergraduate and graduate students she enjoys teaching courses in areas of statistics and machine learning.