

# USC Schaeffer

Leonard D. Schaeffer Center  
for Health Policy & Economics

## 2012/2013 RCMAR Scholars



**Cleopatra Abdou**

Assistant Professor, USC

Project Title: *African American Healthcare Decision and Stereotype Threat*

Objective: To examine the health care utilization decisions of African American stereotype threat.



**Ricardo Basurto-Davila**

Health Economist, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Project Title: *Health and Economic Benefits of Chronic Disease Prevention Efforts in Los Angeles County.*

Objective: To develop a microsimulation model to analyze how policies that reduce risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease affect health and economic outcomes of middle age and older Los Angeles County residents.



**Silvia Barcellos**

Research Scientist, USC

Project Title: *Health Insurance and Financial Risk among Diverse Elderly Populations*

Objective: To study the effects of health insurance on financial risk among minority elderly.

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## 2013/2014 RCMAR Scholars



**Leandro Carvalho**

Research Scientist, USC

Project Title: The goal of this pilot is to investigate such hypothesis in the context of minority populations, who are at greater risk of financial stress. Does financial stress affect their decision-making?

Objective: This project will investigate such hypothesis in the context of minority populations, who are at greater risk of financial stress: *Does financial stress affect their decision-making?* Previous work has shown that the expenditures and the caloric intake of Social Security (SS) and Food Stamp recipients increase sharply at payday, because some households experience increased financial stress right before the arrival of their SS checks.



**Juan Saavedra**

Research Scientist, USC

Project Title: Limited English Proficiency and Fettered Financial Capabilities among U.S. Immigrants

Objective: The goal of this project is to try to establish whether a causal relationship exists between limited English proficiency and adult financial decision-making

## 2014/2015 RCMAR Scholars



**Jennifer Ailshire, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor, USC

Project Title: Unequal environments and social disparities in hypertension and diabetes.

Objective: The purpose of the proposed research is to determine if stressors and resources in the residential environment account for the large racial and ethnic differences that have been observed in hypertension and diabetes. Understanding and reducing racial and ethnic disparities in health is a significant challenge facing U.S. public health researchers and policy makers.



**Robynn Cox, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor, Spelman College

Project Title: Identifying the Effect of Incarceration on Health Outcomes over the Life Cycle.

Objective: Due to the significant role that the penal system has played in the lives of African Americans, it is doubtful that racial differences in health outcomes can be truly understood without strong identification of the link between incarceration and health. Therefore, this project seeks to understand how incarceration affects health outcomes within a life course approach.



**Ryon Cobb, Ph.D.**

Postdoctoral Scholar, USC

Project Title: Health Shocks & Health Behavior Change: An Intersectionality Approach.

Objective: For older adults, making key behavioral changes (i.e., alcohol consumption, diet, physical activity, and smoking cessation) following a serious health shock (i.e., onset of cancer, diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, or stroke) is critical to managing the progression of disease and improving health and well-beings.



**Karen Woo, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor, USC

Project Title: Medicare Payment Policy and Racial/Ethnic Disparities Among Elderly with ESRD.

Objective: The overall goal of this project is to determine whether recent changes in Medicare payment for dialysis services have mitigated or exacerbated racial / ethnic disparities in treatment and outcomes among elderly Americans with end stage renal disease (ESRD).

## 2015/2016 RCMAR Scholars



**Tyson H. Brown, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Vanderbilt University

Project Title: Understanding Racial/Ethnic Inequalities in Wealth Trajectories in Middle and Late Life: Patterns and Explanations.

Objective: Research on the wealth holdings of racial/ethnic minorities in later life is especially important given several population trends, including the aging Baby Boomer cohort, rising life expectancies, and the increasing racial/ethnic diversity of the older population. The goal of the proposed project is to examine racial/ethnic differences in wealth trajectories, and the extent to which inequities in wealth are associated with differences in social, economic, health and neighborhood factors. The specific aims of the project are to:

- 1) Examine racial/ethnic differences in wealth levels and rates of accumulation between middle and late life among whites, blacks and Hispanics.
- 2) Assess the extent to which social, economic, health and neighborhood factors account for racial/ethnic disparities in



**Uchechi A. Mitchell, Ph.D.**

Postdoctoral Fellow, USC/UCLA Center for Biodemography and Population Health

Project Title: Economic Stress and Disease Risk: A Pathway to Health Inequities Among Older Adults

Objective: Future research as a 2015/2016 USC-RCMAR Scholar will address the effects of economic stressors on cumulative biological risk and the extent to which these stressors contribute to racial and ethnic inequalities in health.



**Maria Jose Prados, Ph.D.**

Associate Researcher, USC - CESR

Project Title: How much can education and health interventions lower old-age health disparities?

Objective: The goal of this pilot is to study the evolution of health disparities over the lifecycle in the hypothetical case of an integral intervention at young ages, which would improve education attainment and health behaviors among minorities. Because health and health behaviors are affected by education, combining education and health behavior interventions may be efficient. Health disparities after retirement are likely the product of a lifetime of accumulated effects of health events and health behaviors, hence the importance of a lifecycle perspective to study this problem.

## 2016/20167 RCMAR Scholars



**Loraine A. Escobedo, Ph.D.**

Postdoctoral Fellow - Research Associate, USC Spatial Sciences Institute

Project Title: Spatial disparities in adherence to colorectal cancer screening among the elderly.

Objective: The overall goal of the proposed research is to understand racial/ethnic and spatial disparities in adherence to colorectal cancer screening among elderly groups in Los Angeles County. Findings from this pilot study can be directly translated into a comprehensive colorectal cancer control and prevention program to increase colorectal cancer screening rates among age-eligible adults, and ultimately, reduce colorectal cancer mortality and health disparities among this vulnerable group.



**Ann Nguyen, Ph.D.**

Postdoctoral Fellow, USC School of Social Work

Project Title: Social Relationships and Depressive Symptom Types among Older African Americans.

Objective: This project will examine depressive symptom typologies/subtypes (i.e., distinct patterns or clusters of depressive symptoms) among older African Americans. A primary aim of this research is to use latent class analysis to identify typologies of depressive symptoms as an innovative means of capturing the heterogeneity of depressive symptoms in a national probability sample of older African Americans. A second aim of this project is to identify functional and structural features of church-based (congregational) and extended family relationships that act as risk and protective factors for being identified with particular depressive symptom types. This research project focuses on providing a better understanding of both mental disease (depressive symptom profiles), as well as the social contexts and resources that individuals inhabit. Findings from this project have several implications and applications for informing more culturally effective and tailored interventions to reduce the excess burden of depression experienced by older African Americans.



**Joseph Saenz, Ph.D.**

Postdoctoral Fellow, USC Davis School of Gerontology

Project Title: Trends in Cognitive Impairment without Dementia and Dementia among Mexicans and Hispanics in the United States.

Objective: This project will examine cross-national trends in the prevalence and age structures of cognitive impairment without dementia (CIND) and dementia among older Mexicans and United States Hispanics. As life expectancy has increased in the United States and Mexico, cognitive impairments have received increasing research attention. However, fewer studies have examined how the prevalence or age of onset of CIND and dementia have changed with demographic changes. In Mexico, given the population level increases in educational attainment throughout the 20th century, recent cohorts of older Mexicans may be more educated, have longer life expectancies, and may be better able to delay the onset of CIND and dementia due to their higher educational attainment. This project will determine whether the prevalence and age structure of CIND and dementia have changed over the beginning of the 21st century with demographic and population level changes among Mexicans and Hispanics in the United States (the majority of whom are Mexican-American).