

14TH ANNUAL SRS

STUDENT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



The Student Research Symposium

A celebration of student excellence in research

The 2021 SRS is going virtual!

The virtual event will be on

March 19 and 20, 2021



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158 12:35 PM**Resource Insecurity During COVID-19: A Biocultural Approach to Health and Behavior amongst Resource Insecure Students at SDSU****Miriam Kopels (Master's)**

Recent estimates suggest that resource insecurity has skyrocketed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting up to 23% of U.S. households –a statistic disproportionately felt by people already suffering from low economic and nutritional security. To investigate the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, we conducted a study using structured online and semi-structured telephone interviews with 113 San Diego State students who self-identified as housing and/or food insecure. Specifically, we investigated: perceptions of extrinsic mortality risk, a construct drawn from life history theory that is expected to correlate with long-term economic and health maintenance; food insecurity; Kessler-6, a non-clinical measure of psychosocial distress; and a 24-hour food recall. During the surveys, students were asked to compare their lives before and during COVID – which allows us to measure the impact of the pandemic statistically. The semi-structured interviews assessed environmental, psychosocial, and nutritional factors that potentially influence the lived experiences of students struggling during the pandemic. The questions asked students to reflect on the services available to them at SDSU, as well as the process of navigating assistance, including potential barriers and gaps in service. The overall trend we saw was that students with higher measures of psychosocial stress tend to have greater difficulty and frustration accessing assistance. This presentation will cover major statistical trends in quantitative data, as well as case studies that demonstrate the themes that emerged out of qualitative interviews. Overall, this research is a timely presentation of the issues impacting housing and food insecure students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

159 12:45 PM**The COVID-19 Graduate Experience****Krista Confetti (Undergraduate)****Jordan Klair**

It is evident that many have experienced life changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One group whose experience has been heavily influenced are those who are currently in their graduate studies, with the global virus altering students current or planned pursuance of post undergraduate schooling. We examined multiple public forum websites to examine the experiences of STEM graduate students, focusing particularly on the role of mentorship and support during the early pandemic transition. We developed a coding tool to identify and categorize types of social support from mentors as well as the impact on students educational experiences and career aspirations. We hypothesized that an overall negative impact would be observed among graduate students and their current experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We utilized thematic content analysis, in which we identified key themes and commonality among students' posts. The findings revealed an overall trend of negative descriptions resulting from the pandemic, including a lack of school and social support accessible to students during a shift in their studies, and specific responses highlight nuances across types of effects of pandemic supports. Although potential reporting biases related to data collection via online forms should be taken into account, our findings may be used to implement future adjustments to graduate programs in order to better prepare for how to support graduate students in future crises. Future studies should examine whether factors previously identified as impactful in previous mentorship scenarios have become more salient during this time of crisis.

Session M1

Oral Behavioral and Social Sciences

Saturday, March 20, 2021, 1:00 PM**160 1:05 PM****COVID-19 and Population Vulnerability in San Diego County****Jessica Embury (Undergraduate)**

Beginning March 2020, the Center for Human Dynamics in the Mobile Age (HDMA) partnered with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) to produce map products that inform local COVID-19 response efforts by public health officials and other decision makers. Web maps and interactive dashboards were created to communicate spatial data and other significant findings. Python scripting was used to automate feature layer and map update procedures in order to dynamically respond to daily changes in the data. Early research mapped the distribution of hospital and emergency department visits related to common chronic medical conditions. As more COVID-19 data became available, predictions were confirmed that communities with greater numbers of diabetes and pulmonary disease related medical visits also experienced higher rates of COVID-19 infection. While the highest case counts were in the South Bay region, zip codes with elevated cases were dispersed across the county. Subsequent

analysis of population demographics revealed an association between high case counts and majority Latinx communities. This health disparity was further clarified by the discovery that Latinx individuals were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in most San Diego County zip codes. Although research is ongoing, preliminary findings are being used by a collaborative team funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to address these inequities by establishing COVID-19 testing sites and reducing barriers to healthcare in underserved communities.

161 1:15 PM

Did the Pandemic Affect Female Workers and Aged Workers More than Their Respective Counterparts?

Bruno Calderon Hernandez (Undergraduate)

As a direct consequence of both the economic and health crises that have occurred, the U.S has reached newfound heights of unemployment; heights that drastically surpass in magnitude that of the 2007-2010 economic crisis. The year 2020 was marked by the highest ever recorded unemployment rate since the postwar era, reaching 14.7%. The labor market greatly lacerated by both the pandemic and the economic crisis, had great imbalances in its equilibrium; due to failures in the labor market and shocks that mostly impacted labor demand, since many businesses closed or went bankrupt even with relative government aid. The principal objective of this work is to analyze the impact that the current health and economic crises have had on the labor market and employment in the U.S. The research questions being posed in this work are: Does the pandemic affect female workers more than their male counterparts? Does the pandemic affect younger workers more so than older ones? How does the pandemic affect wage workers? In order to address each and one of them, the following parameters concerning the labor market in the pandemic will be studied: telework because of the pandemic, unable to work because of the pandemic, pay status of those unable to work, and did not look for work because of the pandemic. To develop this work, data acquired from reliable databases - such as FRED and the Bureau of Labor Statistics - will be utilized. From such data, the tendency of behavior between the different groups will be identified and quantified; measuring how certain gender and age groups are favored or unfavored given the current material conditions of our society. An econometric model will be developed, utilizing the aforementioned sources. Through this work, the degree to which the pandemic and economic crises have both affected men and women, old and young, will be discerned. This research helps in identifying workers and sectors most affected by the pandemic and provides policy implications regarding where economic policies should focus on.

162 1:25 PM

Prosocial Behavior Boosts Socioemotional Well-being During Chronic Stress

Solana Kenyon (Undergraduate)

Kassandra Vasquez

Greta Majus

Nancy Huyn

The present longitudinal study was conducted to further examine if prosocial behavior promotes well-being as indicated in previous studies. This study also sought to examine whether prosocial behavior could protect individuals' well-being from the negative psychological effects of chronic stress amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It was hypothesized that higher participation in prosocial behavior would be linked to better socioemotional well-being over time. A few months into lockdown orders in the United States (Time 1), 749 adults (M age = 62.76) residing in the United States completed an online Qualtrics survey that asked participants about two types of prosocial behaviors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: 1) CDC recommended behaviors that would prevent the spread of infection to others (e.g. social distancing, mask wearing) 2) general prosocial behavior that protects others from psychological and financial harm (e.g. supporting a local business, thanking an essential worker). In addition, participants reported on their socioemotional well-being, including feelings of loneliness and depressive symptoms. Approximately three months later (Time 2), participants reported on their socioemotional well-being again. The findings revealed that higher participation in CDC recommended prosocial behaviors is linked to less depressive symptoms and that higher participation in general prosocial behaviors is associated with less loneliness over time. Together, these findings suggest that behaving prosocially is beneficial for the well-being of both the givers and receivers during times of chronic stress. Future studies should aim to establish the causal direction and account for personality and health factors that could possibly be confounded to the association.