

2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR  
SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



DEEP SOUTH Resource Center for Minority Aging Research



**Oluwatoyosi Adekeye, MBBS, MPH**  
Assistant Professor  
Community Health and Health Prevention  
Morehouse School of Medicine

**HDRTP 2011**

**Dr. Adekeye's** research interests include health policy, cultural competency, and health promotion. Dr. Adekeye is now the Chief Executive Director, Medela Healthcare Initiative (MHI), and the Medical Director, Medela Healthcare Centres, Ltd. (MHC), in Abuja, Nigeria. He remains an adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health and Preventive Medicine, at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia where he formerly served as the Director of the Community Health Leadership Program at the Satcher Health Leadership Institute.



**Tomi Akinjemiju, PhD, MSc**  
Associate Professor and Vice Chair for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion  
Dept of Population Health Sciences  
Associate Director, Community Outreach and Engagement  
Duke Cancer Institute  
Associate Research Professor  
Duke Global Health Institute  
Duke University School of Medicine  
[tomi.akinjemiju@duke.edu](mailto:tomi.akinjemiju@duke.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2015**

**Dr. Akinjemiju** was an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Alabama, Birmingham. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, and received her PhD in Epidemiology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her research has focused on understanding racial disparities in breast cancer screening, mortality and survival in the US. She has investigated the multilevel determinants of racial disparities by focusing on upstream factors such as individual and neighborhood level socio-economic status and healthcare resources. Currently, she is interested in examining the risk for young onset, highly aggressive breast cancer among women of African descent. She was at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, as Associate Professor/Assistant Dean for Inclusion, and is now at Duke University.



**Abimobola Akomolafe, MD, MPH**  
Assistant Professor  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
[akomola@msm.edu](mailto:akomola@msm.edu)

**HDRTP 2008**

**Dr. Akomolafe**, in the Geriatric Section of the Department of Medicine at Morehouse School of Medicine Chief, is involved in research on Genetic Epidemiology of Alzheimer Disease. As the section chief for Geriatrics, her emphasis for the residents is to develop them as excellent physicians caring for our elderly population. The demographics of the population in the United States are changing and over 13% of the population is over the age of 65 years. Over six residents have gone on to complete a fellowship in geriatrics.

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**Foluke Alli, MD, NCMP**  
Assistant Professor  
UAB Family & Community Medicine

**HDRTP 2015**

**Dr. Alli** is a board certified family medicine physician with additional training in women's health. Her area of focus include menopause and menopause related medical conditions including hormone therapy, abnormal vaginal bleeding, and urinary incontinence. My research interest is on health disparities in women's health with a focus on menopause. She is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and is certified with the North American Menopause Society.



**Mudasir (Roohi) Andrabi, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
[mandrabi@ua.edu](mailto:mandrabi@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2020  
Pilot Grant 2021**

**Dr. Andrabi** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Nursing at the University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing. She completed her graduate studies at the University of Delhi, earning a Master's degree in Adult Health and Gerontology. She received her PhD in Health Education and Health Promotion from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2019. Dr. Andrabi is working collaboratively with other researchers at the University of Alabama on health disparities research among African Americans living in rural Alabama. Her area of research interest is in Cardiovascular and neurorehabilitation.



**Andrei Barasch, DMD, MDSc**  
Private Dental Practice

**Pilot Grant 2008**

**Dr. Barasch** is an Oral Medicine specialist whose research interests are focused on the treatment of oral cancers and oral care for the medically complex patient.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Keri Barron, PhD, RN**  
Assistant Professor  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
[kabarron@ua.edu](mailto:kabarron@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2019**

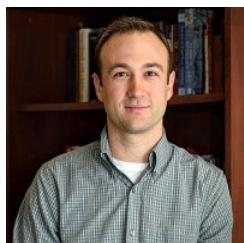
**Dr. Barron** is an Assistant Professor in the Capstone College of Nursing at the University of Alabama. She earned her BSN from the Mississippi University for Women in 2012, MSN from William Carey University in 2013, and PhD in Nursing with an emphasis in leadership in 2017 from the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Barron's dissertation inspired her to transition her research from that of preventing heart failure readmissions to managing and preventing cardiovascular disease. Dr. Barron's research interest is the management and prevention of cardiovascular disease through physical activity in the underserved population.



**Amy Beasley, DNP, RN**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
[amy.m.beasley@ua.edu](mailto:amy.m.beasley@ua.edu)

**HD RTP 2015**

**Dr. Beasley's** main concentration in nursing practice involves hospice and palliative care. She worked as a hospice case manager and is a National Board Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse (NBCHPN). Her interests include pain and symptom management at the end of life and rural community healthcare access.



**Justin Blackburn, PhD**  
Assistant Professor, Health Policy and Management  
Director, PhD Program in Health Policy and Management  
Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health  
Affiliated Scientist, Regenstrief Institute  
[jblackb@iu.edu](mailto:jblackb@iu.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2013**

**Dr. Blackburn** is an assistant professor of outcomes research at Indiana University. Prior to that he was in the Department of Health Care Organization & Policy at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. His research is primarily focused on using large secondary data sources, such as medical billing claims from Medicaid and Medicare, to answer questions about health outcomes, health services utilization, and changes in health policy. He has published articles on a variety of topics including agricultural health, eye injuries, homicide, cancer, asthma, cost-sharing within public insurance, low-severity emergency department visits, and preventive dental care. Future and ongoing research includes long-term care policy and outcomes as well as the use of secondary stroke prevention medications. Dr. Blackburn holds a PhD in epidemiology from UAB and a MPH from the University of Kentucky.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Pamela Bowen, PhD, CRNP, FNP-BC**

Assistant Professor  
UAB School of Nursing  
[pbowen@uab.edu](mailto:pbowen@uab.edu)

**HDRTP 2013**  
**HDRTP Pilot Grant 2015**

**Dr. Bowen** is a board certified Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP). She is currently building a program of research that focuses on promoting and increasing physical activity for the prevention of obesity-related chronic illnesses among minorities, especially African Americans. The rates of obesity and obesity-related illnesses in Southeastern minority populations are trending at a faster pace than in other parts of the country. Because obesity disproportionately affects minority populations, exacerbations of existing health disparities will more likely continue into older adulthood. Her additional research interest encompasses successful minority aging, health disparities, and health policy. As an experienced FNP with a nursing history of serving low-income populations and working in home health, Dr. Bowen is cognizant that health policy changes are also essential to improve healthcare for all people because many times patients will have outside factors that may negatively affect patient care.



**L. Joy Bradley, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Community Medicine and Population Health **HDREP 2019-2020**  
University of Alabama  
[Ljbradley1@ua.edu](mailto:Ljbradley1@ua.edu)

**Dr. Bradley** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Medicine and Population Health at the University of Alabama (UA). Dr. Bradley completed graduate studies at the University of Louisiana at Monroe earning a Master of Arts degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. She received her doctorate in Health Promotion and Behavior from the University of Georgia in 2017. Working collaboratively with other researchers in the Institute of Rural Health Research at UA, she is piloting a maternal health intervention, TERM (Telemedicine-Towards Empowering Rural Moms). Her other research areas focus on understanding the intersections of race, age, and sexual wellness. Investigating and improving reproductive health for communities of color are the overarching goals of her research career.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Reed Bratches, PhD, MPH, MALS**  
Postdoctoral Fellow  
Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research and  
Education  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[mreedb@uab.edu](mailto:mreedb@uab.edu)

**HDREP 2022-2023**

**Dr. Reed Bratches** is a postdoctoral fellow at UAB's Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research and Education. Reed received his PhD from Dartmouth's Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice. His research focuses on family caregivers and triadic communication, with a particular interest in communicating information from clinic visits to patients and family caregivers. Outside the office, Reed can be found with his wife chasing their young son, or on the golf course.



**Todd Brown, MD**  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
UAB Division of Cardiovascular Disease  
[tmbrown@uab.edu](mailto:tmbrown@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2012**

**Dr. Brown's** research focuses on the epidemiology and prevention of cardiovascular diseases including studying the clinical implications of the metabolic syndrome, the epidemiology of myocardial infarction, and the utilization and benefits of cardiac rehabilitation.



**Lee Caplan, MD, PHD, MPH**  
Professor and Resident Research Advisor  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
[lcaplan@msm.edu](mailto:lcaplan@msm.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2008**

**Dr. Caplan's** research interests include cancer disparities and developing training programs to develop cancer disparities researchers, cancer prevention and control, and religion/spirituality and health.

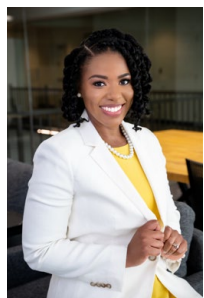
# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Daniel I. Chu MD MSPH**  
Associate Professor  
Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[mdchu@uabmc.edu](mailto:mdchu@uabmc.edu)

**HDTRP Cancer Partnership 2016  
Pilot Grant Award 2022**

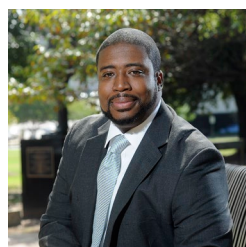
**Dr. Chu** is an Associate Professor in the Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He completed his undergraduate at Yale and medical school at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. After residency at Boston University Medical Center, he completed a colon and rectal surgery fellowship at the Mayo Clinic. His clinical practice specializes in the spectrum of colorectal disease including inflammatory bowel disease, colorectal cancer, diverticular disease, and anorectal disorders. His NIH-funded research interests focus on identifying, understanding, and reducing health disparities in surgery with particular attention to health literacy.



**Amber Clark, MD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Physical Medicine  
and Rehabilitation  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[amberclark@uabmc.edu](mailto:amberclark@uabmc.edu)

**HDREP 2021  
Pilot Grant Award 2022**

**Dr. Clark** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) at UAB. She earned her undergraduate degree in Biology from Tougaloo College and her medical degree from the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. Dr. Clark completed her residency in PM&R at UAB and served as Administrative Chief Resident her senior year. She thereafter joined faculty. Dr. Clark's research interests include the intersection of disability with minority status and how this interplay contributes to health disparities. Dr. Clark hopes to use the information obtained from her scholarly work to inform equitable policy change and to dismantle systemic injustices within our society.



**Olivio J. Clay, PhD, MA**  
Associate Professor  
UAB Department of Psychology  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[oclay@uab.edu](mailto:oclay@uab.edu)

**HDTRP 2008  
Diversity Supplement 2010 Pilot  
Grant 2016**

**Dr. Clay's** research interests: Racial/ethnic health disparities within older adults, caregiving, social support, diabetes, healthcare utilization, advanced statistical methods, mobility and cognition in older adults.

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**Shameka Cody, PhD, AGNP-C**  
Assistant Professor  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
[slcody@ua.edu](mailto:slcody@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2018  
Pilot Grant 2019**

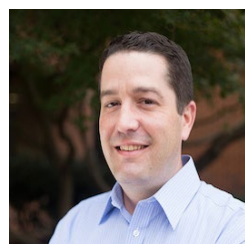
**Dr. Cody** is an Assistant Professor at The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing. She obtained her Masters of Science in Nursing in 2012 and her PhD in Nursing in 2017 from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Cody is a board-certified Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner with clinical expertise in adult primary care, infectious disease, international travel medicine, and women's health. Her research trajectory focuses on reducing racial and sleep health disparities and addressing factors that influence cognitive outcomes among older adults with HIV.



**Matthew Cribbet, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychology  
University of Alabama  
[mrcribbet@ua.edu](mailto:mrcribbet@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2018  
Pilot Grant 2021**

**Dr. Cribbet** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alabama. He studies the role of stress and sleep in cardiovascular disease risk. He is particularly interested in sleep as a mechanism linking childhood adversity to cardiovascular disease risk. Dr. Cribbet received a BS in Psychology from The Ohio State University and PhD in Clinical Health Psychology from the University of Utah. He completed a postdoctoral fellowship in sleep medicine from the University of Pittsburgh. Prior to joining the faculty at The University of Alabama, Dr. Cribbet was a faculty member in Clinical Psychology at Texas Tech University.

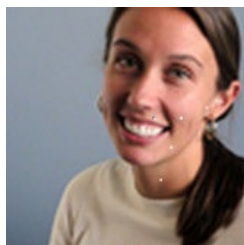


**Michael Crowe, PhD**  
Professor  
Director, Undergraduate Psychology Honors Program  
Assistant Director, Roybal Center for Research in Applied Gerontology  
UAB Department of Psychology  
University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)  
[mgcrowe@uab.edu](mailto:mgcrowe@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2008**

**Dr. Crowe's** research expertise is in the area of cognitive decline and dementia in older adults. He has authored a number of publications on how potentially modifiable factors such as environmental complexity, stress, and health may play a role in cognitive aging. His other areas of research include mental health in older adults, and the consequences of cognitive and mental health in terms of everyday activities and health behaviors. In recent work, Dr. Crowe has been conducting research on the association between factors related to health disparities (e.g., diabetes, educational factors, health literacy) and cognitive function in older adulthood.

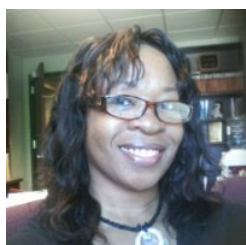
## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Jenny M. Cundiff, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychology  
University of Alabama  
[Jmcundiff1@ua.edu](mailto:Jmcundiff1@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2018**  
**Pilot Grant 2021**

**Dr. Cundiff** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alabama. She received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology with an emphasis in Health Psychology from the University of Utah in 2014, subsequently completing two years of postdoctoral training in Cardiovascular Behavioral Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. Her research examines if and how our social lives contribute to poor health. Much of her work has been focused specifically on biopsychosocial mechanisms (e.g., stress physiology, social interactions) linking lower social status to poor health.



**Juliet (Jaye) Davis Weaver, PhD**  
Dean  
Queens University of Charlotte  
[weaverj@queens.edu](mailto:weaverj@queens.edu)

**HDRTP 2008**

**Dr. Davis Weaver's** research interests include exploring strategic business plans for innovations in residential care facilities, such as relationships of nursing home administrator's entrepreneurial cognitions to facility financial performance, comparing hospice and non-hospice quality of care and service utilization patterns in nursing homes by ownership status, and other health care management areas of research. She began with RCMAR at UA in the HDRTP in 2008. She moved to Florida A&M University as Associate Professor in the Division of Healthcare Management, progressing to Professor and Division Director, Healthcare Management, in the School of Allied Health Sciences. In 2022, Dr. Weaver accepted a new position as a Dean at Queens University of Charlotte, a small institution in North Carolina.



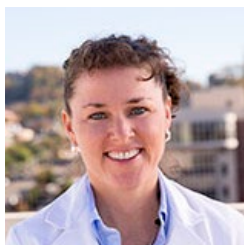
**Catherine Dawson, PhD, OT**  
Occupational Therapist  
Bullock County Hospital  
Director  
Bullock County Hospital Home Health Agency  
[cdawson@ustconline.net](mailto:cdawson@ustconline.net)

**HDRTP 2010**

In addition to her clinical work as an OT at Bullock County Hospital, **Dr. Dawson** previously taught courses at Tuskegee University in the Occupational Therapy Master's program, as well as general health sciences courses, such as Medical Vocabulary and Introduction to Health Care Systems.



# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Laura Dreer, PhD**  
Director, Psychological & Neuropsychology Clinical  
Research Services  
Associate Professor  
UAB Department of Psychology  
[dreer@uab.edu](mailto:dreer@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2008**

**Dr. Dreer's** areas of clinical research concentration are threefold: (1) examining the role of social cognitive (e.g., problem-solving abilities) and lifestyle factors on adjustment to chronic health conditions, (2) development of health promotion and lifestyle interventions to improve health outcomes and adjustment, and (3) evaluating competency-related issues (i.e., medical decision-making, management of finances, driving). She holds secondary appointments in the departments of physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology, and psychology.



**Raegan Durant, MD, MPH**  
Director/PI of Deep South RCMAR  
Associate Dean, Diversity and Inclusion, School of Medicine  
Professor of Medicine, Division of Preventive Medicine  
Medical Director, Cooper Green Mercy Health Services  
Authority; University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)  
[rdurant@uab.edu](mailto:rdurant@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2007**

**Dr. Durant** became the Director/PI of the Deep South RCMAR in Jan 2020. He received the pilot grant award in the first year of the Deep South RCMAR. His research interests include: Hospital use among minority patients with heart failure; Incorporation of community health works in chronic disease management for heart failure; Developing strategies to increase minority participation in clinical trials.



**Yvonne D. Eaves, PhD, RN**  
Director of the WellStar School of Nursing  
Thomas M. & Elizabeth D. Holder Endowed Chair of  
Nursing and Associate Professor  
Kennesaw State University  
[yeaves@kennesaw.edu](mailto:yeaves@kennesaw.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2007  
HDRTP 2008**

**Dr. Eaves** earned the PhD in nursing from the University of Michigan, with an emphasis on Gerontology; the MS in community Health Nursing from Northern Illinois University; the Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Saint Xavier University in Chicago; and a diploma in nursing from Saint Francis Hospital School of Nursing in Peoria, Illinois. Dr. Eaves previously held positions as Assistant Professor at the Schools of Nursing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and most recently at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Dr. Eaves is devoted to being a champion for the care of older adults and is excited about the opportunity to contribute to the mission of the WellStar School of Nursing, especially in the area of health disparities research and education. She was selected as the Director and Holder Endowed Chair in July 2017.

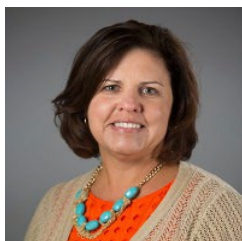
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**Yohannes Endeshaw, MD, MPH**  
Professor & Chief of Geriatrics  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
[yendehsaw@msm.edu](mailto:yendehsaw@msm.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2014**

**Dr. Endeshaw's** research interests include racial and socioeconomic disparities related to sleep complaints and adverse health outcomes.



**Kathleen Foley, PhD, OTR/L**  
Associate Professor and Research Coordinator  
Brenau University  
School of Occupational Therapy  
[kfoley@brenau.edu](mailto:kfoley@brenau.edu)

**HDRTP 2010  
Pilot Grant 2011**

In scholarly activity, **Dr. Foley** is focused on maximizing occupational performance in older adults and the development of inter-professional health care teams. She has received intramural grant funding to investigate toileting disparities among older Black residents in skilled nursing facilities.



**Cassandra Ford, PhD, MSN, MBA, RN, FAHA**  
Associate Professor  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
[ford039@ua.edu](mailto:ford039@ua.edu)

**HDRTP 2009  
Diversity Supplement 2010**

**Dr. Ford's** primary research interest is cardiovascular disease in rural, southern African American women focusing on older adults as well as health disparities in rural populations.

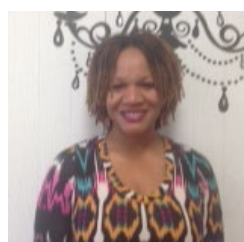
# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Ricardo Franco, MD**  
Assistant Professor  
UAB Division of Infectious Diseases  
[rfranco@uab.edu](mailto:rfranco@uab.edu)

**HDRTP 2014**  
**Pilot Grant 2014**

**Dr. Franco** is board certified in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases and Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. His interest focuses on interventions to improve access to care and new therapies in Chronic Hepatitis C; clinical management and trials in HCV mono-infection and HIV-HCV co-infection; and the accelerated pathogenesis of HIV-HCV co-infection. Recently, Dr. Franco had coordinated the Hep C Circle of Care award, instrumental in the expansion of the 1917 Viral Hepatitis Clinic. Since then, the 1917 Viral Hepatitis Clinic had developed collaborations with the Liver Center, the Department of Emergency Medicine and Charity Care at UAB, becoming a major point of linkage to Hepatitis C care for a broad referral base in the State of Alabama.



**Charnetta Gadling-Cole, PhD, MSW**  
Interim Chair and Director  
Alabama A&M University  
[charnetta.cole@aamu.edu](mailto:charnetta.cole@aamu.edu)

**HDRTP 2011**

**Dr. Gadling-Cole's** research areas include evidence based practices, HIV/AIDS, gerontology/geriatrics, international social work and racial disparities.



**Stephanie Garrett, MD, CHPE, FACP**  
Assistant Professor  
Geriatrics Division  
Department of Medicine  
Emory University School of Medicine  
[stephanie.lynn.garrett@emory.edu](mailto:stephanie.lynn.garrett@emory.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2010**  
**HDRTP 2011**  
**Diversity Supplement 2012**

**Dr. Garrett's** research interests: Clinical research in culturally sensitive cognition assessment in older African Americans.

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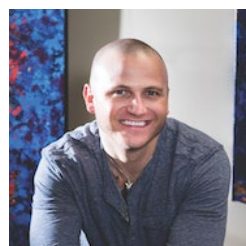
**Luciana Giorgio, PhD, MSW**

Assistant Professor  
School of Social Work  
University of Alabama

[mluciana.giorgio@ua.edu](mailto:mluciana.giorgio@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2022**

**Dr. Giorgio** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama School of Social Work. She studies how social and cultural contexts influence sleep and cardiovascular health among Latinx individuals with the aim to promote health equity. Her current research examines the association of sociocultural stressors, coping strategies, and sleep health outcomes in this population. In the long-term, Dr. Giorgio will focus on developing and tailoring family-based interventions that promote optimal sleep health and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease among Latina women and their families. She obtained her PhD in Advance Practice in Social Work with a concentration in Psychology at Columbia School of Social Work. Before completing her PhD training, Dr. Giorgio received a Master of Science in Social Work from Columbia School of Social Work with a concentration in Advance Practice and Programming and received a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



**Burel Goodin, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Department of Psychology  
Director, Biobehavioral Pain Research Laboratory  
Co-Director, Center for Addiction and Pain Prevention and  
Intervention (CAPPI)

University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)

[bgoodin1@uab.edu](mailto:bgoodin1@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2013**

**Dr. Goodin** is a clinical health psychologist with specialization in pain-related behavioral medicine. He examines the interactions of psychosocial and biobehavioral characteristics in relation to the experience of pain through the key pathways of stress-related hormones (neuroendocrine function) and immune function. His previous and ongoing projects are conducted in collaboration with colleagues at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, the University of Florida, as well as UAB. Over the years, Dr. Goodin has been involved with several different studies that afforded him the opportunity to become very familiar with experimental models of evoked pain using quantitative sensory testing. As part of these studies, he has developed and refined methods to assess pain sensitivity and modulation (e.g., endogenous pain inhibition and facilitation) using dynamic experimental pain stimuli. This has led him to the next step in his research, which is to begin evaluating the impact of factors such as sleep disturbance and neuropeptides (e.g., oxytocin) on pain sensitivity and modulation across the adult lifespan.



**Stephen Gray, MD**

Associate Professor  
Department of Surgery, Division of Transplantation  
University of Maryland School of Medicine

[shgray@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:shgray@som.umaryland.edu)

**Diversity Supplement 2014  
Pilot Grant 2015**

**Dr. Gray's** research interests include functional assessment in liver transplant patients utilizing the Life-Space assessment. He moved to the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 2019, where he is Medical Director for Transplant Quality, Outcomes and Regulatory Compliance, and Director of Hepatobiliary Surgery. He was previously at University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB).

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**Alula Hadgu, DrPH, MA**  
Associate Professor  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
[ahadgu@msm.edu](mailto:ahadgu@msm.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2019**

**Dr. Hadgu** is an Associate Professor at Morehouse School of Medicine. Before joining the Morehouse School of Medicine in 2016, Dr. Hadgu was employed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a Mathematical Statistician and Distinguished Fellow for 35 years. His current research interest include repeated measures methodology, statistical evaluation of diagnostic tests, categorical data analysis and the epidemiology and etiology of CVDs and diabetes.



**Anne Halli-Tierney, MD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Family Medicine  
College of Community Health Sciences  
University of Alabama  
[halli002@ua.edu](mailto:halli002@ua.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2016  
HDRTP 2016**

**Dr. Halli-Tierney** is an assistant professor in the department of family medicine at The University of Alabama's College of Community Health Sciences. She works with medical education at levels of learning from undergraduate to post graduate students, and focuses on interdisciplinary models of education. Her research interests include interdisciplinary educational models and their effects on students' learning, the impacts of interdisciplinary health care models on older adults' wellbeing and quality of life, and the quality of care provided in interdisciplinary settings.



**Lonnie Hannon III, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Health Behavior  
UAB School of Public Health  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[lonniehannon@uab.edu](mailto:lonniehannon@uab.edu)

**Diversity Supplement 2010  
HDRTP 2011**

**Dr. Hannon** was an Associate Professor of Sociology at Tuskegee University when he started with RCMAR, and moved to University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in 2021. He completed his graduate work at UAB. His dissertation focused on neighborhood and socioeconomic factors influencing urban migration among African Americans. Dr. Hannon is an experienced researcher and educator. His interests include the cultural, political, and economic factors that shape society. His specific area of study examines the effects of legacy-based housing policy on neighborhood development and community empowerment. He has received over one million dollars in grant funding to stimulate community engagement. His recent peer reviewed articles discuss innovative dissemination strategies and community empowerment. Dr. Hannon serves on the Board of Directors for the Birmingham Land Bank Authority and the Southside Baseball Association.

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Dale Hardy, PhD, RD, LD, CDE, CHES**  
Associate Professor  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
[dhardy@msm.edu](mailto:dhardy@msm.edu)

**HDREP 2018**

While working as a dietitian in hospitals and clinics, **Dr. Hardy** was entrusted with the nutritional care of cancer patients, some of whom had a short time to live due to this terminal illness. Dr. Hardy attended to cancer patients after their surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments, and encountered patients in long-term care units and hospice, who experienced distressing symptoms as a result of the illness. These symptoms took a toll on the patient and added to the intolerance of other symptoms associated with the cancer disease process. While working in a medical setting, health disparities among minorities were very noticeable and common. This is the main reason Dr. Hardy has undertaken research in this area. Dr. Hardy's research background demonstrates a continual development of academic and research skills from the beginning of her doctoral studies. Dr. Hardy completed her PhD in Epidemiology in May 2008 at the University of Texas School of Public Health, with concentration in chronic disease epidemiology, and minors in biostatistics and health promotion.

During her postdoctoral fellowship in health disparities cancer treatment research, Dr. Hardy acquired knowledge and skills to undertake research in this area that she is very passionate about. During this fellowship Dr. Hardy published several papers that focused on disparities in trends, treatment, and toxicity in a cohort of non-small cell lung cancer using Surveillance Epidemiology, and End Result (SEER)-Medicare linked data. Even in the area of receipt of hospice care and length of stay in hospice, disparities between race/ethnic groups compared to whites were obvious. These experiences enhanced Dr. Hardy's outlook on health disparities research, which has allowed her to gain hands-on experience in data management and data modeling.



**Erin Harrell, PhD, MS**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychology  
University of Alabama  
Associate of the Alabama Research Institute on Aging  
[erharrell@ua.edu](mailto:erharrell@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2020**

**Dr. Harrell** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama. She earned her PhD in Cognitive Psychology with an emphasis in human factors and aging from Florida State University. Dr. Harrell's dissertation inspired her to expand her research from adherence to health behaviors with the potential to slow or reverse cognitive decline to looking at how stress across the lifespan may be accelerating the aging process in older African Americans and how racism related stress may play an intricate role in this process. Dr. Harrell is also interested in looking at how racism related stress may be impacting African American caregiver's decision-making when it comes to determining health treatments for their loved ones at end of life.

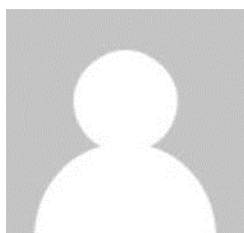
# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Charlie Harris, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychology  
Clayton University  
[CharlieHarris@clayton.edu](mailto:CharlieHarris@clayton.edu)

**HDRTP 2009**

**Dr. Harris'** primary research interest is in examining psychosocial and cultural factors that influence body image perceptions and weight management in African-American women, both pertaining to themselves and their children. A secondary interest is to develop innovative delivery models for weight loss counseling such as the use of E-counseling for overweight and obese women.



**Yvonne Hipps, PhD, MSW**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Generations Connected Inc.

**HDRTP 2009**

Through **Dr. Hipps'** non-profit Generations Connected, Inc., a health and wellness intergenerational program for youth, seniors and families, Dr. Hipps works with a senior community medical clinic with several locations in the greater Atlanta area. They reach out to those who support loved ones in their homes with a diagnosis of cognitive impairment - depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Charlie Harris, another RCMAR scholar (see above), serves with the coalition.

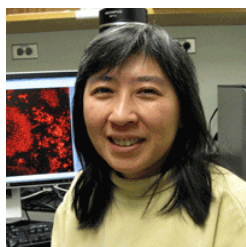


**Gwendolyn Hooper, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
[glhooper@ua.edu](mailto:glhooper@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2020**

**Dr. Hooper** is an Associate Professor in the Capstone College of Nursing at the University of Alabama. She received her PhD in nursing from the University of Kentucky in 2013 and joined the faculty at The University of Alabama as an Assistant Professor 2014. Dr. Hooper holds dual board certifications as a family and urology nurse practitioner and is a fellow of the Academy of Urologic Nurses and Associates. Her clinical and research career have focused on raising awareness and improving the care and quality of life of men with prostate cancer and the education and treatment of women with pelvic floor disorders.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Hui-Chen Hsu, PhD**  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[rheu078@uab.edu](mailto:rheu078@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2007**

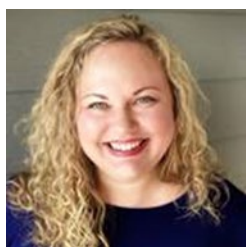
**Dr. Hsu's** research interests: Further understanding of the novel mechanisms of up-regulation of type I IFN by pDCs around autoantibody-producing germinal centres, and the development and delivery of autoantigens by MZ-P B cells is being analysed to develop novel therapies for treatment of systemic lupus erythematosus. They are developing new lupus mouse models to study the safety and efficacy of using an anti-human DR5 antibody (TRA-8) as novel therapy of lupus and other autoimmune diseases. The ongoing project is to test the method of action and effectiveness of TRA-8 in depleting inflammatory cells to determine its potential utility as a therapy for patients with autoimmune and inflammatory diseases.



**Li Huang, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Departments of Psychology & Sociology  
Tuskegee University  
[huangl@mytu.tuskegee.edu](mailto:huangl@mytu.tuskegee.edu)

**HDRTP 2015  
Pilot Grant 2016**

**Dr. Huang** received her PhD from Auburn University. She finished her post-doc training at the University of South Carolina. Her training and research mainly focus in the area of human development and family area of developmental psychology. Her current research focuses on the etiology of problem behaviors among immigrant and minority youth, academic achievement and retention rate for under representative minority students.



**M. Lindsey Jacobs, PhD, MSPH, ABPP**  
Postdoctoral Researcher  
University of Alabama  
[mjacob008@uab.edu](mailto:mjacob008@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2022**

**Dr. Jacobs** is a Research Associate in the Department of Psychology at The University of Alabama and a Clinical Research Psychologist at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center. She is a licensed clinical psychologist in Alabama and is board-certified in Geropsychology. Dr. Jacobs' primary clinical and research interests include decision-making capacity, mindfulness and values-based interventions in late life, competency-based training in clinical psychology and geropsychology, and mental health care quality and access.



## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Karen Johnson, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
School of Social Work  
University of Alabama  
[kjohnson@ua.edu](mailto:kjohnson@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2019**

**Dr. Johnson** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama, School of Social Work. Dr. Johnson received her PhD from the Columbia University, School of Social Work and completed post-doctoral training in Global Mental Health and Implementation Science from Columbia University / New York State Psychiatric Institute in August of 2018. Dr. Johnson's research focuses on 1) Decreasing sexual risk behaviors and other co-occurring risks such as intimate partner violence, common mental health disorders among low-income, drug-using women across the life course; and 2) Evidence-based intervention development, adaptation, acculturation, and implementation. In addition to her research training, Dr. Johnson has over twenty years of direct practice experience working with low-income women with high rates of incarceration, homelessness, drug use, and sexual risk behaviors. Dr. Johnson has also served as a co-investigator and supported intervention adaptation and implementation efforts for two studies (funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).



**Allison Jones, PhD, MS**  
Assistant Professor  
Acute, Chronic & Continuing Care  
UAB School of Nursing  
[arjones3@uab.edu](mailto:arjones3@uab.edu)

**HDRTP 2016**

**Dr. Jones** is an Assistant Professor in the Acute, Chronic & Continuing Care Department at the UAB School of Nursing where she teaches in the Undergraduate nursing program. She earned her BSN, SN, and PhD from the University of Kentucky. She has a background in emergency and trauma nursing with a broader focus on critical care. Dr. Jones is also a Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist in the Adult Acute Care field. Her research focuses on outcomes related to transfusion of stored blood components, including the blood collection, preservation, and utilization processes, and how those issues impact patient outcomes. She is interested in exploring transfusion practices and outcome disparities in patients with major trauma.



**Lynn (Jones) Benson, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Psychology & Sociology  
Tuskegee University  
[jonesg@mytu.tuskegee.edu](mailto:jonesg@mytu.tuskegee.edu)

**HDRTP 2014**

**Dr. Benson** earned her degrees, Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Master of Education in Counseling from Tuskegee University. She earned the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counseling from Clark Atlanta University. Dr. Jones has over twenty years of experience in higher education. She has international experience in Malawi and Uganda, in teaching and in assisting on various public health projects. Research Interests include Adolescent Violent Behavior, HIV Testing Amongst College Students at HBCUs, HIV Prevention and Education, Mental Health in Mbale, Uganda.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Richard Kennedy, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
UAB Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology,  
Palliative Care  
[rekenned@uab.edu](mailto:rekenned@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2012**

**Dr. Kennedy's** interests are in the statistical modeling of microarray data (particularly using multivariate or mixed effects models), quality control in microarray data, statistical computing, and linear models. He is particularly interested in the unique aspects of applying microarray technologies and analysis to the area of neuroscience.



**Giyeon Kim, PhD**  
Professor and Chair  
Executive Editor, *Ethnicity & Health*  
Associate Editor, *Aging & Mental Health*  
Department of Psychology  
Chung-Ang University  
Seoul, South Korea  
[gkim@cau.ac.kr](mailto:gkim@cau.ac.kr)

**HD RTP 2010  
Pilot Grant 2011**

**Dr. Kim** is a gerontologist whose research focuses primarily on racial and ethnic disparities in mental health and mental health service use among older adults. Dr. Kim has been involved in several projects relating to mental health disparities and has extensive experience with various racial and ethnic groups, including non-Hispanic Whites, African Americans, Latinos (Mexican Americans and Cuban Americans), Asians (Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Vietnamese and Koreans), and American Indians/Alaska Natives (AIANs). Dr. Kim's work has been supported by grants examining (1) barriers and facilitators to mental health service use among racially/ethnically diverse older adults and (2) the role of geography in racial disparities in mental health service use among older adults. Dr. Kim also conducts research on measurement equivalence of mental health screening tools across diverse cultural groups. Her work on racial/ethnic disparities and measurement equivalence has been published in prestigious peer-reviewed journals such as *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, *The Gerontologist*, and *Journal of Psychiatric Research*. Dr. Kim was awarded the 2017 Margaret M. and Paul B Baltes Award by the Gerontological Society of America. She took a new position with Chung-Ang University in South Korea, and moved to Seoul in the summer of 2017.



**Adam P. Knowlden, PhD, MBA, MS, CHES**  
Associate Professor  
Health Science  
University of Alabama  
[aknowlden@ches.us.edu](mailto:aknowlden@ches.us.edu)

**HDREP 2019**

**Dr. Knowlden** is an Associate Professor of Health Science at the University of Alabama. Dr. Knowlden's research focuses on the pathogenesis and prevention of adiposity and sleep-associated cardiometabolic disease risk factors. Dr. Knowlden has been successfully funded to support his research agenda by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (GRANT12745492). He is a member of the American Academy of Health Behavior, American Public Health Association, American Academy of Sleep Medicine, and Society for Public Health Education and previously served as Associate Editor for the peer-reviewed journal, *Health Education and Behavior*. Dr. Knowlden earned his MS and PhD degrees from the University of Cincinnati. He received his MBA from Franklin University while employed as a Legislative Analyst for the Columbus City Council (Ohio). Dr. Knowlden is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) registered by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing.

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Lauren Kois, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychology  
University of Alabama  
[lekois@ua.edu](mailto:lekois@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2020**

**Dr. Kois** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alabama and a core Psychology-Law faculty within its Clinical Psychology PhD Program. She received her PhD in Psychology (Clinical Forensic focus) from John Jay College and the Graduate Center at the City University of New York. She completed a Clinical Psychology Internship at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, with rotations at Butner Federal Correctional Complex (corrections and forensics) and Central Regional Hospital (forensics and neuropsychology). Her primary area of research has focused on criminal forensic assessment, specifically competence to stand trial and mental state at the time of the offense.

She is the Founder and Co-Director of the Alabama Forensic Assessment Research and Evaluation (Alabama FARE) Project, which is funded by the Alabama Department of Mental Health. She is licensed to practice psychology in Alabama and has over 10 years of forensic mental health experience. Given disproportionate BIPOC contact with the criminal justice system, high rates of mental health and substance use disorders among criminal justice populations, and the growing need to address aging among individuals who are under correctional supervision,

Dr. Kois is highly motivated to engage in HDREP's research training, grant intensives, and courses on bioethics, biostatistics, epidemiology, and minority aging.



**Lewis Lee, PhD, MSW**  
Assistant Professor  
School of Social Work  
University of Alabama  
[lhlee@ua.edu](mailto:lhlee@ua.edu)

**HDRTP 2018**

**Dr. Lee** is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Alabama. He received his BA & MA from Korea University, MSW from the University of Pennsylvania, and PhD from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Lee has worked with various populations who are in need, including at-risk youths, adult inmates, and Asian immigrants. His primary research areas cover reentry of people with criminal histories, disparities in mental health service use, substance abuse, macro practice, and community-based participatory research. Dr. Lee has been involved in research and has published on mental health service use among persons coming into contact with the criminal/juvenile justice systems.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Loretta Lee, PhD, CRNP, FNP-BNC**

Assistant Professor  
UAB School of Nursing  
[llee@uab.edu](mailto:llee@uab.edu)

**HDRTP 2013**  
**HDRTP Pilot Grant 2015**

**Dr. Lee** has a special interest in health disparities and chronic conditions in African-American men. Diabetes is a chronic condition with complications that affect African-American men disproportionately compared to their counterparts. Given her special interest she has developed a program of research that is focused on the Effect of Social Support and Intuitive Eating Practices on Diabetes Self-Care Management in African-American men.

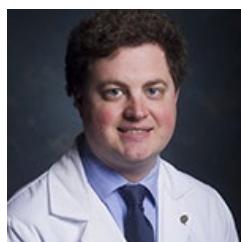


**Junfei Lu, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Educational Studies  
University of Alabama  
[junfei1982@gmail.com](mailto:junfei1982@gmail.com)

**HDRTP 2017**  
**Pilot Grant 2017**

**Dr. Lu** obtained his PhD in Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program from the University of Iowa. He is currently an Assistant Professor at the rehabilitation counseling program in the department of Educational Studies in Psychology, Research, Methodology, and Counseling, University of Alabama, where he teaches online courses in group counseling, career counseling, multicultural counseling, etc. His primary research interests are in the area of resilience, particularly as that relates to spirituality and mindfulness. He also conducts research in counseling identity and competence development and attitudes toward people with disabilities.



**Michael J. Lyerly, MD**

Assistant Professor  
Director, Birmingham VAMC Stroke Center  
UAB Vascular Neurology Fellowship Program  
Department of Neurology  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[mlyerly@uabmc.edu](mailto:mlyerly@uabmc.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2017**

**Dr. Lyerly** is an associate professor in the Department of Neurology, Division of Cerebrovascular Diseases at UAB. His research interests focus on disparities in access to stroke care, stroke systems of care and health outcomes research among Veterans with stroke. He currently is the Director of the Primary Stroke Center at the Birmingham VA and also works with the national VA Telestroke Program to improve access to stroke care for rural veterans.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Kimberly Martin, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Epidemiology  
UAB School of Public Health  
[martinkd@uab.edu](mailto:martinkd@uab.edu)

**HD RTP 2015  
Pilot Grant 2018**

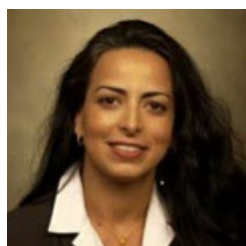
**Dr. Martin** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She graduated from New York University in 2004, and then received her Doctor of Philosophy in Chronic Disease Epidemiology at Yale University in 2009. Her dissertation investigated racial differences in the eligibility for and receipt of carotid endarterectomy in a large national sample of elderly ischemic stroke patients. Dr. Martin completed her postdoctoral training at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 2013, focusing on the patient-provider relationship among minorities and other vulnerable populations.



**Maya D. Martin, DSW, LMSW**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Social Work  
Tuskegee University  
[mmartin@tuskegee.edu](mailto:mmartin@tuskegee.edu)

**HD REP 2021**

**Dr. Martin** is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama. Dr. Martin's research mainly focuses on the impact community senior centers have on the mental health of older adults. In addition to researching food security within the geriatric population, her work has also explored the reciprocal relationship between social support and mental wellness of rural older adults who are active participants at their local senior centers.



**Shadi S. Martin, PhD, MSW, MPA/HSA, MA**  
Vice Provost for International Education  
Dean of Graduate School & Chief International Officer  
University of Alabama at Birmingham

**Pilot Grant 2009**

**Dr. Martin** moved to UAB in June 2022. She is She was professor and founding dean of the School of Social Work at U of Nevada, Reno (UNR). She was at McGill School of Social Work in Montreal from 2014-2019. Before joining McGill University, Dr. Martin was an associate professor of social work at the University of Alabama where she taught for over 10 years. Dr. Martin holds a PhD in Social Work from the University of Utah (2004) as well as a Masters in Social Work (2001). Her research focuses on health disparities among culturally/ethnically diverse populations, specifically the influence of culture on health care seeking behaviors of older Middle Eastern immigrants and African Americans. Dr. Martin has an extensive experience in international social work, including the World Health Organization (WHO) in Europe and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Middle East. She has received numerous awards and recognition for her work throughout her career including Fulbright Fellowship, MIT Dissertation Award, and the Hartford Faculty Scholar Award.

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Gina M. McCaskill, PhD, LMSW, MPA**

Medical Social Worker  
Kidney/Pancreas Transplant  
Comprehensive Transplant Institute  
UAB Medicine  
[gmccaskill@uabmc.edu](mailto:gmccaskill@uabmc.edu)

**HDRTP 2015  
Pilot Grant 2016**

**Dr. McCaskill** earned a PhD in Social Work from the University of Alabama with minor coursework in Gerontology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is a Licensed Master Social Worker in Alabama. Her areas of expertise are Gerontology and Health Disparities. Her research focuses on promoting quality of life and wellbeing in older Veterans with multiple chronic health conditions. Dr. McCaskill has a growing record of peer-reviewed publications and grant funding at the Federal level from the National Institute on Aging, Institutional level from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, as well as private funding from the John A. Hartford Foundation.



**Ian McDonough, PhD**

Assistant Professor, Psychology  
College of Arts & Sciences  
University of Alabama  
[immcdonough@ua.edu](mailto:immcdonough@ua.edu)

**HDRTP 2016  
Pilot Grant 2018**

**Dr. McDonough** is currently an Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Alabama and is an Associate of the Alabama Research Institute on Aging. Dr. McDonough received his BS from UCLA in 2006, his PhD from the University of Chicago in 2011, and did his postdoc at the Center for Vital Longevity at the University of Texas at Dallas until 2015. He recently received the Matilda White Riley Early Stage Investigator Honors from the National Institute of Health and was accepted into the highly competitive Butler-Williams Scholars Program at the National Institute on Aging. Dr. McDonough's current research focuses on the neural correlates of memory retrieval and how they differ with old age. More recently, he has also begun to investigate how the neural correlates differ in middle-aged and older adults at risk for Alzheimer's disease, with a particular focus on racial/ethnic health disparities.

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Gabe H. Miller, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[ghmiller@uab.edu](mailto:ghmiller@uab.edu)

**HDREP 2022**

**Dr. Miller** is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He earned a BA in Political Science and Africana Studies and PhD in Sociology from Texas A&M University. His research interests include political and policy determinants of health, population health and intersectionality, sexual and gender minority health disparities, and racial health disparities. Dr. Miller is currently funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) as a Health Equity Scholar for Action. His RWJF research broadly investigates political and policy determinants of sexual minority health and examines the impact of over 40 state-level LGBT-protective policies on a host of health outcomes for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.



**Myles Moody, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[mdmoody@uab.edu](mailto:mdmoody@uab.edu)

**HDREP 2020**  
**Diversity Supplement 2021**

**Dr. Moody** is an Assistant Professor for the Sociology Department at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Morehouse College 2013 prior to earning his Master of Arts degree in Sociology at the University of Memphis in 2015. Dr. Moody earned his PhD in Sociology from the University of Kentucky in May 2020. His research interests include: medical sociology, racism and health, mental health, racial disparities in health, and health equity. Dr. Moody's current research examines how vicarious racism-related stress impacts the health of Black Americans.

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



### **Mercy Mumba, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Director, Center for Substance Use Research and Related  
Conditions  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
[mnumba@ua.edu](mailto:mnumba@ua.edu)

**HD RTP 2017  
Pilot Grant 2018**

**Dr. Mumba** is an Associate Professor at the University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing. In 2022, she became Director of the newly established Center for Substance Use Research and Related Conditions at UA. She graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing and Health Innovation in 2010, with an Honors Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She received her Medical Surgical certification from the Medical Surgical Nursing Certification Board in 2013. In 2016, Dr. Mumba graduated with her PhD in Nursing with a concentration in education and research

Dr. Mumba has an extensive clinical background, both in acute care and long-term care. She has assumed many leadership and administrative roles both in the clinical setting and academia. Her experience in academia includes lecture experiences and clinical supervision of students. Her academic areas of expertise include holistic health assessment, fundamentals of nursing, and nursing research. Dr. Mumba has won several notable awards, including the Rising Star Award from [Nurses.Com](https://www.nurses.com) in their Giving Excellence Meaning awards. She is a recipient of many scholarships and fellowships from the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas Health Resources, and Sigma Theta Tau International. Dr. Mumba has further received many leadership and mentoring awards, including the Deans Mentoring Award from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Dr. Mumba is an innovative researcher who is well versed in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Her primary research area of focus is substance abuse among nurses and their psychosocial wellbeing. Her other research interest include self-efficacy and functional status in older adults and how these relate to healthy aging and wellness.



### **Philip F. Musa, PhD, PE, MPH**

Professor of Management and Information Systems  
Director of Management Programs  
UAB Collat School of Business  
[musa@uab.edu](mailto:musa@uab.edu)

**HD RTP 2009**

Reflective of his educational background, **Dr. Musa's** research interests intersect electrical engineering, business/information systems, and public health. His curiosity in Information and Communications Technologies for Development has coxswained his interests to health disparities and developing countries. Dr. Musa has published dozens of research in academic journals such as Journal of Information Technology for Development, Journal of Medical Systems, European Journal of Information Systems, Communications of AIS, Communications of ACM, Journal of Information Technology Management, Journal of Information Systems Education, Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries, etc. He is currently conducting research on Health Information Systems and Outcomes for Chronic Diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa.



## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Soumya J. Niranjani, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
School of Health Professions  
Health Services Administration  
[soumya14@uab.edu](mailto:soumya14@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2020**

**Dr. Niranjani** is currently an Assistant Professor in the UAB Department of Health Services Administration at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is a pharmacist by training, holds a Master's degree in Clinical Investigation Sciences from the University of Louisville and PhD in Medical Sociology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Niranjani is currently researching access and awareness of preventive services, specifically lung cancer screening among underserved persons in the Deep South and in the Veteran population.



**Hyunjin Noh, PhD, MSW**  
Assistant Professor  
University of Alabama  
School of Social Work  
[hnoh1@sw.ua.edu](mailto:hnoh1@sw.ua.edu)

**HDRTP 2013  
Pilot Grant 2015**

**Dr. Noh's** areas of interest and expertise: Aging and healthcare service utilization, end-of-life care, minority groups' use of hospice care, health disparity, and qualitative methods.



**JoAnn Oliver, PhD, RN, ANP-BC, CNE**  
Professor  
University of Alabama  
Capstone College of Nursing  
[joliver@ua.edu](mailto:joliver@ua.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2012**

**Dr. Oliver** began teaching at the Capstone College of Nursing in January of 2002. She has taught in both the undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. Dr. Oliver is a Certified Nurse Educator. She earned her Ph.D. at Georgia State University. While attending Georgia State University, she received the Sigma Theta Tau Epsilon Alpha Chapter Research Committee Award and the Promise of Nursing for Georgia Regional Faculty Fellowship. Dr. Oliver completed a one-year post-doctoral Health Disparities Research Training Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Oliver has received federal funding to complete her research, which focuses on cancer screening, cancer health disparities, and decision-making. She has numerous publications and presents at local, state, national, and international levels.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**William Opoku-Agyeman, PhD, MPH, MS**

Assistant Professor  
Master of Healthcare Administration (MHA)  
School of Health and Applied Human Sciences  
College of Health and Human Services  
University of North Carolina Wilmington  
[opoku-agyeman@uncw.edu](mailto:opoku-agyeman@uncw.edu)

**HD RTP 2017**

**Dr. Opoku-Agyeman** is now at UNC Wilmington, and was an Assistant Professor with the Department of Health Services Administration at the University of Alabama. His research interest includes; an aspect of financial management in healthcare, and strategies specifically about the supply chain, hospital purchasing alliance, Information technology exchanges across healthcare systems, hospital's population management and location of health care organizations as a function of strategy. William holds a Master's of Science Degree in Geographic Information Science from the University of Akron, Ohio, and Masters in Public Health from Kent State University in Ohio. He also graduated from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Natural Resource Management in Ghana, West Africa.

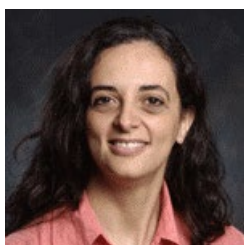


**Raheem Paxton, PhD**

Associate Professor  
College of Community Health Sciences  
University of Alabama  
[rpaxton@ua.edu](mailto:rpaxton@ua.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2020**

**Dr. Paxton** completed a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, a Master's of Science in Kinesiology from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior from the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina. In addition to his formal studies, he completed two National Cancer Institute-funded R25T postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Hawaii Cancer Center and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. His research interest is focused on the development, implementation, and evaluation of theory-based physical activity and dietary intervention for at-risk and underserved populations. The populations he worked with have included cancer survivors (i.e., ovarian, breast, prostate, and childhood cancer survivors) and older adults. More recently, he has expanded his research to include rural children and older adults living in Alabama. Dr. Paxton has extensive experience in conducting health outcomes research and has published several studies examining outcomes research in the context of prospective intervention and cross-sectional studies.



**Maria Pisu, PhD**

Professor  
UAB Division of Preventive Medicine  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[mpisu@uab.edu](mailto:mpisu@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2011**

**Dr. Pisu's** research interests: Disparities in access to care, Geographic variation in treatment, Economic burden of disease, Cancer survivorship, Economic evaluation

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Eric P. Plaisance, PhD, FACSM, ACSM-CEP, CSCS**

Associate Professor and Department Chair  
Department of Human Studies  
School of Education  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[plaisep@uab.edu](mailto:plaisep@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2014**

**Dr. Plaisance** is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Human Studies. He is also an Associate Scientist in the UAB Nutrition Obesity Research Center (NORC). His research interests include Adaptive thermogenesis, Nutrient sensing, Lipid metabolism, High intensity resistance and Interval exercise.



**Sola Aina-Popoola, PhD, MS**

Assistant Professor  
School of Nursing  
Tuskegee University  
[oinapopoola@tuskegee.edu](mailto:oinapopoola@tuskegee.edu)

**HDRTP 2016**

**Dr. Popoola** is a Registered Nurse with a Master Degree in Nursing and a PhD in Education from Auburn University. She has been a clinical nurse for 25 years and a Nurse Faculty for eight years. She was selected as Holmes Scholar, 2016. She has three publications out of which two were peer-reviewed articles in both international and national journals. Dr. Popoola collaborates with other Health care professionals in self-management training education for Adult Diabetes Type 2 clients living in black belt counties of Alabama and working with two others colleges in promoting healthy management around Alabama.



**Haiyan Qu, PhD, MHSA**

Associate Professor  
Department of Health Services Administration  
UAB School of Health Professions  
[hyqu@uab.edu](mailto:hyqu@uab.edu)

**HDRTP 2012  
Pilot Grant 2021**

**Dr. Qu** is an investigator and methodologist for several research projects being conducted to address environmental and behavioral factors affecting multi-stakeholders' treatment decision-making. Dr. Qu's research interests include patient-centered outcomes research, health disparities, rehabilitation care, quality of care, medication adherence, and shared decision-making.

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Nicole Redmond, MD, PhD, MPH**

Medical Officer, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), Div of Cardiovascular Sciences (DCVS), Clinical Applications and Prevention Branch (CAPB)

[Nicole.Redmond@nih.gov](mailto:Nicole.Redmond@nih.gov)

**HDRTP 2012**

**Dr. Redmond's** research interests include racial and ethnic health disparities in cardiometabolic diseases, health communication and health behaviour, and community based primary care for criminal justice populations. Prior to joining NHLBI, Dr. Redmond was Assistant Professor with UAB Division of Preventive Medicine. See her website: [www.drnicoleredmond.com](http://www.drnicoleredmond.com)



**Rhiannon Deierhoi Reed, DrPH**

Assistant Professor  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
School of Medicine  
Department of Surgery

**Pilot Grant 2020**

**Dr. Reed** obtained her DrPH in Outcomes Research from the UAB School of Public Health, Department of Health Care Organization and Policy, in April 2019 and joined faculty in the Department of Surgery in July of that year. She is an epidemiologist/clinical data analyst with a focus on long-term care of living kidney donors and organ transplant policy. Her research interests center on qualitative and mixed methods, with a long term goal of becoming a leading expert in developing and testing interventions to support family caregivers in the organ transplantation context.

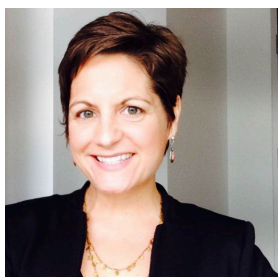
# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Desiree Rivers, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Dept of Community Health and Preventive Medicine  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
[drivers@msm.edu](mailto:drivers@msm.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2020**

**Dr. Rivers** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health and Preventive Medicine and research faculty in the Cancer Health Equity Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Rivers holds degrees in Psychology, Public Health-Health Care Organization and Policy, and Health Education from Vanderbilt University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Texas A&M University. Dr. Rivers has completed fellowships in public health and health services research from UAB Lister Hill Center for Health Policy, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation as well as a behavioral oncology postdoctoral fellowship from Moffitt Cancer Center. Dr. Rivers was a 2016 HDRTP Fellow funded by W. Montague Cobb/National Medical Association and most recently a 2017 NIA Butler Williams Scholar. Dr. Rivers' research interests include exploring healthcare disparities—including access and utilization of breast and colorectal cancer services; health literacy and informed decision making—such as factors influencing participation in research and clinical trials among medically underserved populations; and social determinants of health. Dr. Rivers' research has been supported by NIMHD Centers of Excellence, NCI Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities and most recently NIA RCMAR. Dr. Rivers' current RCMAR pilot explores the bio-behavioral components of a diet intervention in reducing risk for breast cancer among African American women. Dr. Rivers' future research will develop multi-level interventions to address cancer disparities across the lifespan.



**Nicole Ruggiano, PhD, MSW**  
Associate Professor  
Associate, Alabama Research Institute on Aging (ARIA)  
John A. Hartford Geriatric Social Work Scholar  
School of Social Work  
University of Alabama  
[nruggiano@ua.edu](mailto:nruggiano@ua.edu)

**HDRTP 2017**

**Dr. Ruggiano** is an Associate Professor within the School of Social Work at the University of Alabama, in Tuscaloosa. She has earned a PhD in Urban Affairs and Public Policy from the University of Delaware and an MSW (Social Work) from Temple University. Dr. Ruggiano's research focuses on decision making and management of health and support services for older adults with chronic conditions. Currently, her work aims to develop and test mobile information technologies that are culturally and regionally sensitive and support family caregivers of adults with dementia. She is particularly interested in developing technology-based interventions that support caregivers in rural communities and for those who are racial and ethnic minorities. Dr. Ruggiano has also conducted research on health self-management among older adults with chronic conditions.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Kara Sands, MD**  
Assistant Professor  
UAB Division of Neurology

**HDRTP 2014**

**Dr. Sands'** research interests include acute ischemic stroke treatments (thrombolysis), secondary stroke prevention (antiplatelets and anticoagulants), and quality improvement in stroke care. Dr. Sands is now working in Arizona.



**Letisha Scott, DNP, CRNP, NP-C**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
lsscott2@ua.edu

**HDREP 2022**

**Dr. Scott** is a Clinical Assistant Professor at The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing. She obtained her Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and her Doctor of Nursing Practice from The University of Alabama. Dr. Scott is a board-certified Family nurse practitioner with clinical expertise in primary care for pediatrics and adults, emergency nursing, and critical care nursing. Her research focuses on improving cardiovascular health across the lifespan. Dr. Scott is interested in implementing evidence based-practice concepts to decrease minority health disparities especially in the areas of cardiovascular health, lupus, and cancer screenings.

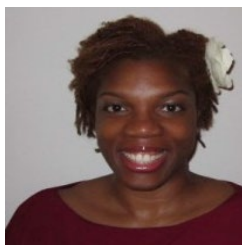


**Avani Shah, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
School of Social Work  
University of Alabama  
[shah009@sw.ua.edu](mailto:shah009@sw.ua.edu)

**HDREP 2021**

**Dr. Shah** is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Alabama. She completed her training at the University of Alabama, earning a Master's degree in Social Work and a PhD in Clinical Psychology with a specialization in Gerontology. As a Hartford Faculty Scholar, she evaluated a health behavior change and depression intervention in the cardiac rehabilitation setting. Dr. Shah plans to focus on health disparities research among African Americans living in rural and urban settings. Her research interests include overcoming barriers to health and mental health care, health behavior change, technology based interventions, and psychological interventions for Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, and Depression.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Kendra Sheppard, MD, MSPH**

Assistant Professor

UAB Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care  
Staff Physician, Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center

[ksheppard@uab.edu](mailto:ksheppard@uab.edu)

**Diversity Supplement 2011  
HDRTP 2012**

**Dr. Sheppard's** research interests include teaching interprofessional education and developing interprofessional practice across health care settings, particularly in long term care; improving transitional care of nursing home residents within the healthcare system; and integrating the topic of health disparities/inequities for medical and/or interprofessional trainees within the healthcare system, particularly outpatient practice.



**Geoffrey A. Silvera, PhD**

Assistant Professor

Department of Health Services Administration  
University of Alabama at Birmingham

[gsilvera@uab.edu](mailto:gsilvera@uab.edu)

**HDREP 2021**

**Dr. Silvera** is a management scholar that is primarily focused on the influence of executive decision-makers on end-user outcomes. In the field of health care management, his work centers on the ability of hospital executive decision-makers (especially CEOs) to positively influence care quality, patient experience, and patient safety. In the field of diversity management, his work has centered on the institutionalization of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in local government administrations. He presently serves as an Assistant Professor of Health Services Administration at The University of Alabama-Birmingham in the School of Health Professions' Department of Health Services Administration. He previously served on the faculty at Auburn University. His doctorate in Health Policy and Administration was completed at the Pennsylvania State University, and both his masters and bachelors degrees were earned at the University of Florida. His research has been awarded by AcademyHealth and Southern Management Association conferences. In addition to his academic position, he presently serves on the editorial boards of *HCMR (Health Care Management Review)* and *QMHC (Quality Management in Health Care)*, and as the Associate Editor of *PXJ (Patient Experience Journal)*. He also serves on the executive board for the health care management division of the Academy of Management and is the incoming track-chair (Health Administration/Public Administration) for the Southern Management Association's annual conference.

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Gaynell Simpson, PhD, MSW**

Assistant Professor  
Georgia State University  
[gsimpson@gsu.edu](mailto:gsimpson@gsu.edu)

**HDRT 2013**

**Dr. Simpson's** areas of interest and expertise: Minority aging and health disparities; chronic health conditions and caregiving; caregiving demands and health outcomes; identification of risk and protective factors associated with women's health.



**Omar Sims, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Department of Social Work  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[osims@uab.edu](mailto:osims@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2019**

**Dr. Sims** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and he also has appointments in the Department of Health Behavior, School of Public Health, the Center for AIDS Research and the Comprehensive Center for Healthy Aging in the School of Medicine. As a health and public health scientist, his program of research is focused on public health management and clinical management of liver disease caused by Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and HCV-related liver disease in patients living with HIV/HCV co-infection. In particular, his research is focused on populations heavily burdened with HCV, but often under-researched or under-represented in liver research: HCV patients with co-existing alcohol, substance use, and psychiatric disorders, patients with HIV/HCV co-infection, and older adults aging with HCV.



**Tamika Smith, PhD, MS**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Health Behavior  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[tamsmith@uab.edu](mailto:tamsmith@uab.edu)

**HDREP 2021**

**Dr. Smith** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Behavior at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She earned her BS in Human Development and Family Services from the University of Alabama, MS in Counseling Psychology from the University of West Alabama, and her PhD in Health Education and Promotion from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Smith's former work as a Social Worker for the State of Alabama inspired her to focus her research on first-time parenting and adolescent parents. Her research advanced to developing interventions that identify protective factor to decrease sexual risk behaviors that lead to HIV and STI acquisition among African American adolescents and emerging adults.



## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Robert Sorge, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Psychology  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[rsorge@uab.edu](mailto:rsorge@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2020**

**Dr. Sorge** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alabama and the Director of the PAIN Collective at UAB. Robert received his PhD at Concordia University investigating heroin and cocaine addiction under Dr. Jane Stewart. He then completed his first postdoctoral fellowship at McGill University establishing a new model of nicotine self-administration in rats before joining Dr. Jeff Mogil at McGill University for his final postdoctoral fellowship. It was in Mogil's lab that he published a number of high-impact papers uncovering sex differences in the use of immune cells and receptors to mediate pain in mice. At this time, he also demonstrated that male scent caused a stress response in mice that alters pain expression. His lab at UAB is primarily focused on the impact of diet on immune cells and recovery from injury in rodents and human patients. Robert also serves at the Co-Chair for the Sex, Gender and Pain Special Interest Group in IASP and is a supporter of examining sex/gender differences at all levels of science.



**Irena Stepanikova, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
UAB Sociology  
[irena@uab.edu](mailto:irena@uab.edu)

**HDRTP 2015**

**Dr. Stepanikova** is a sociologist specializing in health disparities. In her research, she applies socio-psychological theories to better understand mechanisms and processes underlying inequality in health. She also studies the process of health care, and how physician-patient communication and trust contribute to disparities. She has experience using a variety of methodologies, including qualitative approaches (focus groups, in-depth interviews), experiments, and large population-based surveys.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Danielle C. Sutzko, MD, MS, RPVI**

Assistant Professor of Surgery  
Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[dsutzko@uabmc.edu](mailto:dsutzko@uabmc.edu)

**HDREP 2020**

**Dr. Sutzko** was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and grew up in California, North Carolina and Florida before moving to Michigan for her vascular surgery residency. She received a Bachelor of Science from the University of Florida, graduating with a degree in microbiology and cell science with a minor in chemistry. She went on to attend medical school at the University of South Florida, graduating Alpha Omega Alpha. During her research time, Dr. Sutzko completed a post-doctoral health services research fellowship at the University of Michigan's Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation under a National Heart and Lung & Blood Institute T32 grant, where Dr. Nicholas Osborne served as her primary mentor. She joined UAB as an assistant professor in August of 2019 and is also the associate program director for the UAB vascular surgery residency. Her research interests are in health services research, specifically in identifying real world practices to improve vascular surgery outcomes and eliminate disparities among patients undergoing open and endovascular procedures. Her current research relates to defining appropriate quality of care in vascular surgery, and cost effectiveness of vascular interventions for patients with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) and chronic limb-threatening ischemia (CLTI).



**Benjamin Taylor, MD, MPH**

Associate Professor  
Senior Vice President for Clinical Effectiveness  
Associate Chief Medical Officer  
Director, Program in Clinical Effectiveness,  
UAB Health System  
[bbtaylor@uab.edu](mailto:bbtaylor@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2009**



**S. Justin Thomas, PhD, DBSM**

Associate Professor  
Director, Behavioral Sleep Medicine Program  
Department of Psychiatry | UAB  
[sithomas@uabmc.edu](mailto:sithomas@uabmc.edu)

**HDREP 2019**

**Dr. Thomas** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). He is the Director of the UAB Behavioral Sleep Medicine Clinic and Training Program and serves on the Board of Directors for the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine. He has research funding from the American Heart Association, the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute, and the National Institutes of Health. His research interests are translational, spanning basic, clinical, and population science and focus on disparities in sleep and circadian mechanisms underlying health and disease, including hypertension, chronic pain, and HIV.

# 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Theodore Tomeny, PhD**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Psychology  
University of Alabama  
[mtstomeny@ua.edu](mailto:mtstomeny@ua.edu)

**HDREP 2022**

**Dr. Tomeny** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at The University of Alabama and core faculty in the Clinical Child concentration of the Clinical Psychology graduate program. He received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from The University of Southern Mississippi and completed his internship at Indiana University School of Medicine with an emphasis in autism. His research primarily focuses on the experiences of family members of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), with a particular focus on siblings and caregivers. Dr. Tomeny is interested in exploring long-term care for aging families of adults with IDD, including identifying barriers to planning for and obtaining said care.



**Kristen Triebel, PhD**  
Assistant Professor of Neurology  
Training Director  
UAB Division of Neuropsychology  
[ktriebel@uab.edu](mailto:ktriebel@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2009**

**Dr. Triebel** is a clinician scientist investigating cognitive and functional change in patients with neurological disorders. She is funded by the American Cancer Society, NIH, and other private organizations. Her research focuses on decisional capacity, cognition, and everyday functioning of patients with a variety of neurological disorders including cancer, traumatic brain injury, mild cognitive impairment, and Parkinson's disease. Dr. Triebel is also a co-investigator of studies examining financial and medical decision making in healthy older adults and in patients with mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease.



**Yasemin Turkman, PhD, MSN, MPH, APRN**  
Region Ten Community Services Board  
Charlottesville, VA  
[yasemin.turkman@regionten.org](mailto:yasemin.turkman@regionten.org)

**HDRTP 2017**

**Dr. Turkman** is now with the Region Ten Community Services Board in Charlottesville, VA, and prior to her move was an assistant professor at the UAB School of Nursing where she taught in her clinical specialty, psychiatric mental health nursing. Dr. Turkman's research interests are in health disparities in palliative care and psychosocial oncology. She is pursuing research in the access and use of palliative care by older African Americans in the Deep South. Previously, Dr. Turkman examined the experiences and psychosocial needs of women diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer, a subtype that disproportionately affects African American and young women. Her research has been funded by the American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen for the Cure Disparities Program, and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing/Johnson & Johnson.

## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**David E. Vance, PhD, MGS**  
Professor  
Office of Research and Scholarship  
UAB School of Nursing  
[devance@uab.edu](mailto:devance@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2013**

In 2001, **Dr. Vance** realized that highly active antiretroviral therapy was changing the demographic profile of HIV. Now, we are witnessing this change with the graying of the epidemic. In fact, by 2015 half of those with HIV will be 50 and older. Sadly, many older adults with HIV express a cognitive frailty phenotype that interferes with everyday functioning, quality of life, and healthcare. Although he publishes across disciplines, he focuses primarily in nursing since nurses are on the frontline in providing health care to these adults.



**Theresa Wadas, PhD, DNP, MS**  
Assistant Professor  
Capstone College of Nursing  
University of Alabama  
[twadas@ua.edu](mailto:twadas@ua.edu)

**HD RTP 2017**

**Dr. Wadas** is an assistant professor at the University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing. She received her PhD in nursing from the University of Arizona and her DNP from the University of Southern Indiana. Dr. Wadas is board certified as a family and acute care nurse practitioner and a fellow in the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. Her research trajectory focuses on health disparities in three main areas: cellular aging, cardiovascular disease, and psychosocial mechanisms associated with stress physiology among minority and/or underserved populations.

Dr. Wadas' research goals are to:

1. To develop methods that measure and model complexities of physiological and psychosocial relationship systems as it pertains to cellular aging and cardiovascular disease.
2. To use such models to understand the intersection of cellular aging and physiological and the psychosocial context of individuals and families at risk for developing and/or advancing cardiovascular disease.
3. To translate these findings into effective individual, family, and/or community interventions among minority and/or underserved populations.



**Martinique Perkins Waters, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Behavioral Sciences  
University of West Alabama (UWA)  
[mwaters@uwa.edu](mailto:mwaters@uwa.edu)

**HD RTP 2011**  
**HD RTP Pilot Grant 2012**

**Dr. Waters** is interested in improving the mental and physical well-being of older adults, especially those from underserved populations. Additionally she wants to understand family caregivers, quality of life indicators, long-term health trajectories, and mortality. She began teaching at UWA in 2017.

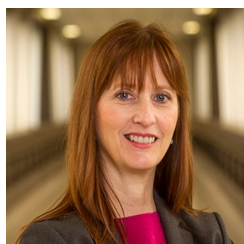
## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Rachel Wells, PhD, MSN**  
Postdoctoral Fellow  
School of Nursing  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[raduncan@uab.edu](mailto:raduncan@uab.edu)

**HDREP 2021**

**Dr. Wells** is a NIH/NINR-funded (1K99NR019854) postdoctoral fellow at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing. She received a BS in Microbiology, English, and Latin/Greek (2006) from the University of Alabama and MSN (2010) and PhD (2019) in Nursing from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She has an extensive clinical background in critical care and adult cardiovascular health. Dr. Wells' cardiovascular nursing practice, experiences in seeking specialty care as a rural dweller, and research experiences as a palliative nurse coordinator inspire her research interest in optimizing early palliative care models for under-resourced advanced heart failure patients and their family caregivers in the rural Deep South. As a scholar, she is interested in improving cardiovascular outcomes and pain management disparities and access to care for those living with advanced heart failure and other chronic, non-malignant illness.



**Connie White-Williams, PhD, RN, FAAN**  
Director of UAB Hospital Center for Nursing Excellence  
Assistant Professor, UAB School of Nursing  
[cwilli@uab.edu](mailto:cwilli@uab.edu)

**HDRTP 2011**

**Dr. White-Williams** is a leader in evidence-based practices and is respected for her transformational leadership and passion for nursing excellence. She is involved with several professional organizations, including the American Heart Association, the International Society of Heart and Lung Transplantation and the American Association of Heart Failure Nurses. Dr. White-Williams interests include monitoring clinical outcomes in heart-failure patients.



**Larrell Wilkinson, PhD, MSPH, CHES**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Human Studies  
Community Health and Health Services Program  
UAB School of Education  
[larrellw@uab.edu](mailto:larrellw@uab.edu)

**HDRTP 2014**  
**Diversity Supplement 2017**  
**Pilot Grant 2018**

**Dr. Wilkinson's** primary research interest focuses on the reduction or elimination of health disparities through community engaged research. This work includes gaining a better understanding of the individual, contextual, and behavioural factors associated with disease or disease risk and the design and implementation of interventions to address these factors. Specifically, his research emphasizes promoting active living, stress management, and healthy eating. Ongoing funded research focuses on the prevention of cardio-metabolic disease (conditions) and improving behavioural health.

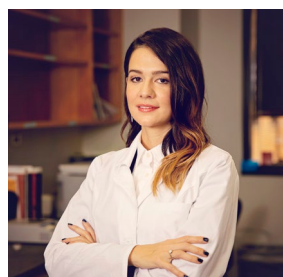
## 2007-2022 DEEP SOUTH RCMAR SCHOLAR SCIENTIST DIRECTORY



**Nicole Wright, PhD, MPH**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Epidemiology  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
[ncwright@uab.edu](mailto:ncwright@uab.edu)

**Pilot Grant 2015**

**Dr. Wright** is an assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She earned her Doctorate and MPH from the University of Arizona. Her research interests include outcomes and effectiveness research in musculoskeletal diseases, particularly osteoporosis. She has worked on several NIH and non-NIH funded studies, including intervention projects aimed to improving osteoporosis knowledge and patient activation, research examining racial differences in osteoporosis outcomes, and validation projects of administrative claim-based algorithms of outcomes related to osteoporosis medication. Dr. Wright has received numerous awards and is published in prominent journals in her field including, *The Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*, *Osteoporosis International*, *The Journal of Rheumatology* and *Calcified Tissue International*.



**Ceren Yarar-Fisher, PhD**  
Vice Chair of Research  
Ohio State University  
Director of Clinical Research  
Belford Center for Spinal Cord Injury  
[yarar-fisher.1@osu.edu](mailto:yarar-fisher.1@osu.edu)

**HDREP 2021**

**Dr. Yarar-Fisher** is now Vice Chair of Research at the Ohio State University, and Director of Clinical Research at the Belford Center for Spinal Cord Injury, as of Oct 2022. She was an Associate Professor at the UAB Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Her translational research program focuses on understanding the pathophysiology of traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI) in the acute and chronic stages with the purpose of developing novel dietary and rehabilitation strategies to improve neuro-recovery, metabolism, and bowel function. Thus, her laboratory is currently developing and testing therapeutic diets and electrical stimulation programs to evaluate new ways to prevent neuronal death and promote recovery and function in the acute stages and improve body composition, gut microbiome composition, and skeletal muscle and metabolic health in the chronic stages of SCI. She has received several NIH and NIDILRR funding to support her investigations in SCI. She was recently selected as one of the 10 Outstanding Young Persons of Turkey by Junior Chamber International for her work in Academic leadership and/or accomplishment.