



Syracuse University Aging Studies Institute

Aging Studies Institute Newsletter

Summer 2020

Inside this issue: CAPS, ASI News, COVID

NIA funds multi-university aging and policy center



CENTER FOR AGING
AND POLICY STUDIES

A consortium of three upstate New York universities has received a 5-year, \$1.5-million grant from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) to fund the Center for Aging and Policy Studies (CAPS), headquartered at Syracuse University. The NIA, part of the National Institutes of Health, issues such grants to support centers of innovative research on the demography and economics of aging.

“We are delighted to receive this NIA grant, as it recognizes CAPS as one of the leading research centers on the demography and economics of aging in the country,” says Jennifer Karas Montez, who serves as director of the Center and PI for the grant. Montez, a sociologist, is Gerald B. Cramer Faculty Scholar in Aging Studies in the Maxwell School and a faculty associate in Syracuse University’s Aging Studies Institute (ASI). “The cross-site consortium provides exciting opportunities for new collaborations that can improve the health and independence of older adults.”

The CAPS consortium includes Syracuse, Cornell University, and the University at Albany. In addition to Montez, the CAPS cross-site leadership team includes, also at Syracuse, Janet Wilmoth, sociologist and director of ASI, and Douglas Wolf, demographer and Gerald B. Cramer Professor of Aging Studies. The leadership team is completed by Kelly Musick, demographer and chair of Policy Analysis and Management in the College of Human Ecology at Cornell, and Benjamin Shaw, associate dean for research at the School of Public Health at U Albany.

The overarching goal of CAPS is to improve the health, well-being, and independence of older adults by addressing issues facing middle-age and older adults and the families that care for them. In its first year, the center will bring together 39 scholars from across the three sites whose research focuses on the demography and economics of aging, organized by the themes of (A) health and well-being and (B) family and intergenerational supports. It will fund innovative pilot projects and will offer a colloquia series, visiting scholars program, grant mentoring program, state-of-the-art methods training, and a research incubator to foster collaborations among CAPS affiliates.

This is the third time that CAPS has received funding from the NIA. Previous grants were awarded in 1994-99 and 2009-14 when CAPS was single institution center at Syracuse. For more information, please go to asi.syr.edu.

ASI NEWS



left to right: Scott Landes, Andrew London, and Janet Wilmoth

Landes, London, and Wilmoth co-author paper on health care for aging veterans

Gerontological Society of America's Public Policy & Aging Report, published the article "[A Population-Based Perspective on Health Care for U.S. Veterans](#)," co-authored by Janet Wilmoth, Andrew London, and Scott Landes. The article provides a "framework that encourages consideration of the shifting needs of the full population of veterans as they age through mid-life into later life." [Maxwell.syr.edu](#)

Sociology PhD student Claire Pendergrast article published in *Ageing & Society*



Congratulations to Claire Pendergrast whose article, "Examining the role of ageing-in-place organizations in building older adults' disaster resilience," was published in *Ageing & Society*.

Read the article: <https://lernercenter.syr.edu/2020/06/05/rb-23/>

Merril Silverstein elected as Chair-Elect of ASA's Section on Aging and the Life Course



Merril Silverstein has been elected Chair-Elect of ASA's Section on Aging and the Life Course (SALC). His appointment will begin August 2020.

<https://www.asanet.org/about-asa/2020-election-results>

COVID SCHOLARSHIP



Madonna Harrington Meyer was quoted in two articles that received wide media pick up

Madonna Harrington Meyer was quoted in two articles that nearly 70 media outlets picked up. The NPR article, [“Too little or too much time with the kids? Grandparenting is tough in a Pandemic.”](#) and The Kaiser Health News article, [“We miss them all so much: Grandparents ache as the COVID exile grinds on.”](#)

Madonna Harrington Meyer quoted in New York Times article, “ For Grandparents, Filling in for Childcare can be ‘Wonderful and Exhausting’

As the coronavirus pandemic stretches on and child care centers remain closed, many grandparents are split into two groups: those who are quarantined from their families and those who are isolating beside them, according to Madonna Harrington Meyer, a sociology professor at Syracuse University and author of “Grandmothers at Work.” Those providing child care can see tremendous benefits—more physical activity, a healthy emotional life, more socializing—but the additional stressors can also lead to burnout. “It’s simultaneously wonderful and too much,” Meyer said.

Read full article [here](#).

Harrington Meyer quoted in Christian Science Monitor article on working parents, COVID-19

"A lot more grandparents are deciding to burst their bubble," to see or care for their grandchildren, says Madonna Harrington Meyer, University Professor of Sociology and expert on intensive grandparenting. She was quoted in the *Christian Science Monitor* article "[I can't keep this up much longer': Parents struggle with pandemic strain.](#)" Maxwell.syr.edu



Scott Landes talks to NPR and Spectrum News about COVID-19, people with disabilities

Scott Landes, says COVID-19 death rates are higher among people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) compared to those without. He says it’s mainly individuals with pre-existing health conditions. “This population, in general, either because of swallowing problems or disorders, or choking disorders, or just more susceptibility to lung infections seems to develop pneumonia at a higher rate than those in the general population,” he says. “That’s just really detrimental when you’re talking about something like COVID-19.” Landes was interviewed for the Spectrum News segment [“COVID-19 Death Rates Higher Among Those with Developmental Disabilities.”](#)

NPR Interview: [COVID-19 Infections And Deaths Are Higher Among Those With Intellectual Disabilities](#)

Today Show: <https://www.today.com/video/how-families-caring-for-children-with-special-needs-are-coping-during-the-pandemic-85224517928>

COVID SCHOLARSHIP



College of Law, Associate Professor Doron Dorfman wrote an Op Ed on COVID-19 impact on FDA Policy for Gay blood donors

Optimism among public health scholars is rare in the era of coronavirus. Yet I suggest that the crisis might present an opportunity to overrule one controversial health law policy that predates the pandemic: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's blood donation ban on gay and bisexual men.

The blood ban was developed out of necessity in response to the 1980's HIV-AIDS outbreak and has since undergone some amendments. The recent iteration of the ban forbids blood banks from accepting donations from men who have had sex with men, or MSM, in the year prior to the donation. To read the full article click [here](#). The article was also accepted to peer review [Journal of Law and Biosciences](#).



Tiago Barreira featured on 9WSYR Bridge Street and CNY Central discussing research on COVID-19 impact on mental illness

Syracuse University is currently doing a research project and they need your help!

The project is examining mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, while we're all dealing with the closures, restrictions, social distancing and being isolated in our homes. Researchers are using an online questionnaire to learn about depression, anxiety, stress, and PTSD, working to find out what conditions and behaviors might influence mental health. One of the main behaviors that researchers are interested in is physical activity and aspects related to it. To read the full article click [here](#).

CNY Central Article: [SU Faculty conduct survey to find affects of COVID-19 on mental illness](#)

To participate in the anonymous survey, click [here](#).



Shannon Monnat and the Lerner Center produced a series of Lerner Center Population Health Research Briefs on COVID-19

Shannon Monnat, the Lerner Center staff and graduate students, have produced an excellent series of Lerner Center Population Health Research Briefs on COVID-19, several of which focus on the older population. Contributing authors include Shannon Monnat, Madonna Harrington Meyer, Scott Landes, Dalton Stevens, Kent Cheng, and Yue Sun.

Check them out at: <https://lernercenter.syr.edu/category/pop-health-research-briefs/>

Monnat was interviewed for the Miami Herald, discusses racial disparities

In Miami-Dade, the county with the most confirmed COVID-19 cases in Florida, African Americans who tested positive for the disease have died at a rate of 4.6 percent compared to a rate of 3.1 percent for white people and 1.7 percent for people whose race is classified as "other," according to data provided in Friday's health department report.. "That's a huge difference," says Shannon Monnat, Lerner Chair for Public Health Promotion.

"[Black people in Miami die of COVID-19 at a greater rate than whites, state data shows.](#)" [Maxwell.syr.edu](#)

COVID SCHOLARSHIP



Nina Kohn wrote a piece in The Hill, “Nursing homes need increased staffing, not legal immunity.”

The piece explains how states are eviscerating protection for nursing home residents by granting providers immunity from negligence claims, and why this approach is not only dangerous but unjustified.

To read the full article click [here](#).

ASI Faculty Affiliate, Nina Kohn wrote an Op Ed in The Hill, “Addressing the crisis in long-term care facilities.”

Bodies are piling up in long-term care facilities across the country and spiraling death rates show no sign of subsiding. These facilities are prime breeding grounds for infection. In addition to residents’ inherent vulnerability, measly sick leave policies encourage staff to come to work sick, and low pay lead direct care workers to hold multiple jobs—often at other long-term care facilities.

The result is staff are nearly perfect vectors for COVID-19, as outbreak patterns in Seattle suggest. Indeed, even prior to the pandemic, most nursing homes—including those earning “five stars” on the federal government’s Nursing Home Compare website— had documented infection control problems. To read full article click [here](#).

Nina Kohn addresses how ageism has shaped the COVID-19 pandemic in Washington Post article

When the novel coronavirus first emerged, the U.S. response was slowed by the common impression that covid-19 mainly killed older people. Those who wanted to persuade politicians and the public to take the virus seriously needed to emphasize that “it isn’t only the elderly who are at risk from the coronavirus,” to cite the headline of a political analysis that ran in The Washington Post in March. The clear implication was that if an illness “merely” decimated older people, we might be able to live with it.

Read full article: [The pandemic exposed a painful truth: America doesn’t care about old people](#)



Social Gerontologist Maria Brown Shares Advice on Caring for Aging Parents During a Pandemic

As people all over the world deal with the coronavirus pandemic, many wonder how to care for aging parents. Adults aged 60 or older, especially those with severe chronic medical conditions, are at higher risk for more serious coronavirus illness and death. Maria Brown, an assistant research professor at the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics and faculty associate in the University’s Aging Studies Institute, offers advice on how to help care for aging parents or family members. To read full article click [here](#).

Brown was also interviewed for an article on NerdWallet.com, [“Do These 4 Things for your Parents During Coronavirus Outbreak.”](#)

Recent Research Grant Awards

“Hunger SNAPs: Food Insecurity among Older Adults: Qualitative Component,” Madonna Harrington Meyer (PI), Coleen Heflin (Co-I) \$50,000 Russell Sage Foundation Presidential Award.

“Food insecurity and chronic diseases in low-income older Americans: The role of SNAP receipt in medication underuse,” Colleen Heflin (Co-I) Funded by University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research. 2020-2022.

2020 Collaboration for Unprecedented Success and Excellence (CUSE) Grant Program

Merril Silverstein

“Intergenerational Transmission of Cognitive Impairment in Later Life”

Kevin Heffernan, Janet Wilmoth & Andrew London

“Race/ethnic variation in vascular aging trajectories and mortality risk: Insight from the Health and Retirement Study”

Recent Publications

Harrington Meyer, Madonna and Ynesse Abdul-Malak. “Policy Challenges for Grandparents Caring for Grandchildren with Disabilities.” [*Journal of Elder Policy*](#).

Mary Helen McNeal and Maria Brown. [*Elder Restorative Justice*](#), Cardoza Journal of Conflict Resolution, Volume 21, Issue 1.

Turk, M. A., Landes, S. D., Formica, M. K., & Goss, K. D. (2020). Intellectual and developmental disability and covid-19 case-fatality trends: Trinetx analysis. *Disability and Health Journal*, 100942. doi:10.1016/j.dhjo.2020.100942

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1936657420300674>

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