

# ALEXIS C. DENNIS

July 2021

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Department of Sociology  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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## EDUCATION

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- (Exp. Spring 2022) Ph.D., Sociology, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
*Dissertation:* "Racial/ethnic Disparities in Depression among Young Adults in the United States"  
*Committee:* Robert A. Hummer (Chair), Allison E. Aiello (Epidemiology), Kenneth A. Bollen, Taylor W. Hargrove, Kathleen Mullan Harris  
*Comprehensive Exams:* Social Stratification & Medical Sociology
- 2016-current Carolina Population Center Predoctoral Trainee
- 2018 M.A., Sociology, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2014 M.P.H., Health Behavior, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2011 B.A., Communication Studies, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with Highest Honors
- 2011 Certificate, Documentary Studies, Duke University

## RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

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Population Health, Medical Sociology, Mental Health, Race / Class / Gender, Race and Ethnicity, Social Stratification, Life Course

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Peer Reviewed

*Forthcoming* Hargrove, Taylor W., **Alexis C. Dennis**, Lauren M. Gaydosch "Educational Gradients in CMR by Race/ethnicity, Nativity, and County-level Characteristics." *Demography*.

- 2021 **Dennis, Alexis C.** “Those Left Behind: Socioeconomic Predictors and Social Mediators of Psychological Distress among Working-aged African Americans in a Post-industrial City” *Du Bois Review*. First View:1-33.
- Dennis, Alexis C.,** Esther O. Chung, Evans K. Lodge, Rae Anne Martinez, and Rachel E. Wilbur. “Looking Back to Leap Forward: A Framework for Operationalizing the Structural Racism Construct in Minority Health Research.” *Ethnicity & Disease*, 31(Suppl 1):301-310.
- 2018 McCarraher, Donna R., Catherine Packer, Sarah Mercer, **Alexis C. Dennis**, Harry Banda, Namakau Nyambe, Randy M. Stalter, Jonathan K. Mwansa, Patrick Katayamoyo, and Julie A. Denison. “Adolescents living with HIV in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia: Their reproductive health needs and experiences.” *PLOS ONE*. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0197853>
- 2017 Velloza, Jennifer, Melissa H. Watt, Laurie Abler, Donald Skinner, Seth C. Kalichman, **Alexis C. Dennis**, and Kathleen J. Sikkema. “HIV-risk behaviors and social support among men and women attending alcohol-serving venues in South Africa: Implications for HIV prevention.” *AIDS and Behavior*. 21(Suppl 2):144-154.
- Watt, Melissa H., **Alexis C. Dennis**, Karmel W. Choi, Nonceba Ciya, John A. Joska, Corne Robertson, and Kathleen J. Sikkema. “Impact of Sexual Trauma on HIV Care Engagement: Perspectives of Female Patients with Trauma Histories in Cape Town, South Africa.” *AIDS and Behavior*. 21(11):3209-3218.
- 2016 **Dennis, Alexis C.,** Sarah M. Wilson, Mary V. Mosha, Gileard G. Masenga, Kathleen J. Sikkema, Korrine E. Terroso, and Melissa H. Watt, “Experiences of Social Support among Women Presenting for Obstetric Fistula Repair Surgery in Tanzania.” *International Journal of Women’s Health* 8:429-439.
- 2015 Watt, Melissa H., Lisa A. Eaton, **Alexis C. Dennis**, Karmel W. Choi, Seth C. Kalichman, Donald Skinner, and Kathleen J. Sikkema. “Alcohol Use During Pregnancy in a South African Community: Reconciling Knowledge, Norms, and Personal Experience. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 20(1):48-55.
- Sikkema, Kathleen J., **Alexis C. Dennis**, Melissa H. Watt, Karmel W. Choi, Tatenda Yemeke, and John A. Joska. “Improving Mental Health Among People Living with HIV: A Review of Intervention Trials in Low- and Middle-income Countries.” *Global Mental Health* 2:e19-42.
- Dennis, Alexis C.,** Clare Barrington, Sayaka Hino, Michele Gould, David Wohl, and Carol E. Golin. “‘You’re in a World of Chaos’: Experiences Accessing HIV Care and Adhering to Medications After Incarceration.” *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care* 26(5):542-555.
- Grewe, Mary Beth, Arianna Taboada, **Alexis Dennis**, Elizabeth Chen, Kathryn Stein, Sable Watson, and Alexandra F. Lightfoot. “I learned to accept every part of myself:

the transformative impact of a theatre-based sexual health and HIV prevention programme.” *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society, & Learning* 15(3):202-217.

Denison, Julie A., Harry Banda, **Alexis C. Dennis**, Catherine Packer, Namakau Nyambe, Randy M. Stalter, Jonathan K. Mwansa, Patrick Katayamoyo, and Donna R. McCarraher. ““The sky is the limit’: Adhering to Antiretroviral Therapy and HIV Self-management from the Perspectives of Adolescents Living with HIV and their Adult Caregivers.” *Journal of the International AIDS Society* 18(1):19358.

Grodensky, Catherine A., Carol E. Golin, Chaunetta Jones, Meheret Mamo, **Alexis C. Dennis**, Melinda G. Abernethy, and Kristine B. Patterson. ““I Should Know Better’: The Roles of Relationships, Spirituality, Disclosure, Stigma, and Shame for Older Women Living with HIV Seeking Support in the South.” *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care* 26(1):12-23.

2012 **Dennis, Alexis C.** and Julia.T. Wood. ““We’re not going to have this conversation but *you get it!*: Black Mother-Daughter Communication about Sexual Relationships.” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 35(2):204-223.

### Other Publications

2021 **Dennis, Alexis C.**, Evans K. Lodge, and Jaelyn Karasik. In the COVID-19 Pandemic Response, the U.S. Has a Health Disparities Data Problem. [Blog] *Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science Blog*, Retrieved: <https://iaphs.org/in-the-covid-19-pandemic-response-the-u-s-has-a-health-disparities-data-problem/>

Gaydosh, Lauren, Taylor Hargrove, **Alexis Dennis**. *Contextual Wave V Database User Guide*. [https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/scholarly\\_works/44558n83p](https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/scholarly_works/44558n83p)

Gaydosh, Lauren, Taylor Hargrove, **Alexis Dennis**. *Wave V-ACA Medicaid Expansion Data User Guide*. [https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/scholarly\\_works/q237j192t](https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/scholarly_works/q237j192t)

Hargrove, Taylor, Gaydosh, Lauren, **Alexis Dennis**. *Contextual Wave IV Database User Guide*. [https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/scholarly\\_works/44558n83p](https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/scholarly_works/44558n83p)

Hargrove, Taylor, Gaydosh, Lauren, **Alexis Dennis**. *Waves I, IV, and V – The Opportunity Atlas: Mapping the Childhood Roots of Social Mobility Data User Guide*. [https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/scholarly\\_works/5x21tq92k](https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/scholarly_works/5x21tq92k)

2020 Gaydosh, Lauren, Taylor Hargrove, **Alexis Dennis**, Brian Frizzelle, and Jonathan Horowitz. *Contextual Wave V Database*. <https://doi.org/10.17615/yfn8-b342>

Taylor Hargrove, Lauren Gaydosh, **Alexis Dennis**. *Waves I, IV, and V - The Opportunity Atlas: Mapping the Childhood Roots of Social Mobility Data*. <https://doi.org/10.17615/87h8-rm91>

Taylor Hargrove, Lauren Gaydosh, **Alexis C. Dennis**. *Contextual Wave IV Database*. <https://doi.org/10.17615/ara1-sj75>.

**Dennis, Alexis** and Nathan Dollar. Dying to Reopen: Comparing North Carolina and Georgia. [Blog] *Carolina Demography*, Retrieved: <https://www.ncdemography.org/2020/05/19/comparing-mitigation-measures-in-north-carolina-and-georgia>

2012 **Dennis, Alexis**, Chanelle Pearson, and Carla Saporta. *Filling in the Gaps: A Racial Equity Framework for Successful Implementation of the Affordable Care Act*. The Greenlining Institute. Retrieved: <http://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/GIREFlayout.pdf>

Saporta, Carla, Nicole Roscoe, **Alexis Dennis**, Jeremy Cantor, and Jason Wurtz. *Health, Equity, and the Bottom Line: Workplace Wellness and California Small Businesses*. The Greenlining Institute & Prevention Institute. Retrieved: <http://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/GIWWPBrief.pdf>

### Media Appearances

2020 “Alexis Dennis -- Public Health and Structural Racism Amidst COVID-19.” *MCSquared Health Podcast*. 18 June, 2020. Retrieved: <https://www.mcsquaredhealth.com/blog/alexis-dennis-public-health-and-structural-racism-amidst-covid-19>

### MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

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**Dennis, Alexis C.** “Racial/Ethnic Differences in the Associations between Life Course Indicators of Socioeconomic Status and Depressive Symptomatology in Adulthood”

Renson, Audrey, **Alexis C. Dennis**, Grace Noppert, Elizabeth McClure, Allison Aiello. “Interventions on socioeconomic and racial inequities in respiratory pandemics: a rapid systematic review.”

Karasik, Jaclyn M., Evans K. Lodge, **Alexis C. Dennis**, Allison E. Aiello. “A call for more partnerships between health equity researchers and the CDC to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.”

### MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

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Boen, Courtney E., Daniel Belsky, Y. Claire Yang, Kathleen Mullan Harris, Allison E. Aiello, **Alexis C. Dennis**, and Dayoon Kwon. “Patterns and Drivers of Black-White Disparities in Biological Age Acceleration in Mid-to-Late Life”

**Dennis, Alexis C.**, Taylor W. Hargrove, Sadie E. Emch, and Robert A. Hummer. “The Influence of Early Life Dis/Advantage and Socioeconomic Mobility on Early-to-Mid Life Depressive Symptom Trajectories among African American Women and Men”

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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“Stressed Out or Chilled Out?: Assessing the Contributions of Stress and Coping to Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Mental Health”

- *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Virtual Meeting, August 2021.*
- *Annual Meeting of the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science, Baltimore, MD, October 2021*

“The Influence of Early Life Dis/Advantage and Socioeconomic Mobility on Early-To-Midlife Depressive Symptom Trajectories among African American Women and Men.” (with Taylor W. Hargrove, Sadie E. Emch, and Robert A. Hummer)

- *Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Virtual Meeting, May 2021.*

“Patterns and Drivers of Black-White Disparities in Biological Age Acceleration in Mid-to-Late Life.” (with Courtney E. Boen, Daniel Belsky, Y. Claire Yang, Kathleen Mullan Harris, Allison E. Aiello, and Dayoon Kwon)

- *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Virtual Meeting, August 2020.*

“Structural Racism and the Development and Maintenance of U.S. Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities.” (with Esther O. Chung, Evans K. Lodge, Rae Anne Martinez, and Rachel E. Wilbur)

- *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Virtual Meeting, August 2020.*

“Educational Disparities at the Intersection of Race/ethnicity, Nativity, and County-level Characteristics” (with Taylor W. Hargrove and Lauren Gaydosh)

- *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Virtual Meeting, August 2020.*

“The Influence of Early Life Dis/Advantage and Socioeconomic Mobility on Early-To-Midlife Depressive Symptom Trajectories among African American Women and Men.” (with Taylor W. Hargrove, Sadie E. Emch, and Robert A. Hummer)

- *Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Washington, D.C. April 2020. Accepted for oral presentation; conference cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic.*

“Racial Differences in the Socioeconomic Correlates of Depression among U.S.-Born Young Adults.”

- *Annual Meeting of the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science, Seattle, WA, October 2019.*
- *Recipient of an LAPHIS Conference Poster Award*

“Associations between Life Course Indicators of Socioeconomic Status and Depressive Symptomatology Among African American Adults.” (with Julie S. Olson and Robert A. Hummer)

- *Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Austin, TX. April 2019.*

“Those Left Behind: Socioeconomic Status and Psychological Distress among African Americans in a Post-industrial City”

- *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, PA, August 2018.*

“Socioeconomic Trajectories and the Mental Health Status of African American Adults.” (with Julie S. Olson and Robert A. Hummer)

- *Annual Meeting of the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science, Washington, DC, October 2018.*

## **TEACHING**

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### **Instructor of Record**

Sociology of Mental Health, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Fall 2020, Spring 2021)

- *Mean evaluation score: 4.79/5.00 across Fall 2020 & Spring 2021 semesters.*

### **Teaching Assistant**

Health and Society, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Fall 2018)

Introduction to Population Health, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Spring 2021)

## **GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS**

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2021-2022      Dissertation Completion Fellowship, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$18,000)

2021              Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (*Honorable Mention*)

                    Summer Research Fellowship, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$5,000)

2020-2021      Population Reference Bureau U.S. Policy Communication Training Program

2016-2018      NIH/NICHD National Research Service Award Predoctoral Traineeship, Carolina Population Center, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (~\$24,000/year)

2013-2014      FHI-UNC Public Health Fellowship, FHI 360 & The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Office of Global Health (~\$39,000)

2011-2012      Health Policy Fellowship, The Greenlining Institute (\$33,000)

## **SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

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2021      Table Presider, “Mental Health in Social Context,” Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August 6-10

Session Chair, “Structural Racism and Health,” Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, May 5-8

Discussant, “Racial Disparities in Aging: Patterns and Determinants,” Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, May 5-8

2020 Discussant, “PAA Presidential Address Topics: Where Are They Now? (with Samuel Preston, Jane Menken, Arland Thornton, and Barbara Entwisle),” Virtual Session for the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, December 8

2019 Session Chair, “Intersectionality Approaches in Demography,” Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, April 10-13

### **Ad Hoc Peer Reviewer**

*Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, AIDS and Behavior, Journal of Infectious Diseases, Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, North Carolina Medical Journal, Ethnicity & Disease*

## **DEPARTMENTAL / UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

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### **University Service**

Member, Robertson Scholars Alumni Council, Robertson Scholars Leadership Program, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, 2021 - present

Member, Executive Director Search Committee, Robertson Scholars Leadership Program, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, 2020

Member, Alumni Council Selection Committee, Robertson Scholars Leadership Program, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, 2017

Co-Chair, Exhibitor Committee, Minority Health Conference, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013-2014

### **Departmental Service**

Student Representative, Faculty Search Committee, Department of Sociology, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2019

Member, Recruitment Planning Committee, Department of Sociology, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016-2018

## **HONORS & AWARDS**

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- 2021 Odum Award for Research Excellence, Department of Sociology, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$1,000)
- 2020 Chancellor's Doctoral Candidacy Award, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$5,000)
- First Place - Carolina Population Center Hackathon 2020, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$100)
- 2019 Poster Award, Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science (\$50)
- Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science "Traversing Divides: Interdisciplinary Research in Population Health and Health Disparities" Pre-Workshop Travel Award (\$700)
- 2016-2017 Initiative for Minority Excellence Award, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$5,000)
- Merit Award, Department of Sociology, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$3,000)
- 2012-2013 Hatch-Barnhill Award, Department of Health Behavior, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2011 Outstanding Achievement in Scholarship Award, Department of Communication Studies, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Public Service Scholar, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2010 Phi Beta Kappa, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Order of the Golden Fleece (Honor Society), The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Lambda Pi Eta (Honor Society), Department of Communications Studies, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2009 LeaderShape Palmer Award, The LeaderShape Institute (\$1,000)
- 2007-2011 Robertson Scholars Leadership Program, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University
- 2007 Girl Scout Gold Award, Girl Scouts of America

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## **OTHER RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**



## Research Experience

- 2019 – Research Assistant for Dr. Taylor Hargrove (Department of Sociology and Carolina Population Center, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and Dr. Lauren Gaydosh (Department of Sociology and Population Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin)
- 2019 Research Assistant for Dr. Taylor Hargrove, Department of Sociology and Carolina Population Center, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2018 Research Assistant for Dr. Liana Richardson, Department of Sociology and Carolina Population Center, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2014 – 2016 Associate in Research, Duke Global Health Institute, Duke University
- 2013 – 2014 Graduate Capstone, Department of Health Behavior, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2012 – 2013 Research Assistant, UNC Center for AIDS Research Social and Behavioral Sciences Core, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2011 Research Assistant for Dr. Jon Hussey, Department of Maternal and Child Health and Carolina Population Center, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Professional Experience

- 2019 – 2020 Photographer, *Pens, Lens, and Soul: The Story of the Beautiful Project* Exhibit (December 2019-February 2020), The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 2019, 2020 Consultant for Dr. Kurt Ribisl, Department of Health Behavior, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2016 Photographer, *The Self Care Exhibit: A Word & Image Act of Self-Preservation & Political Warfare* (March-May 2016), Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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American Sociological Association  
Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science  
Population Association of America

## REFERENCES

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Dr. Robert A. Hummer, Howard W. Odum Distinguished Professor  
Department of Sociology & Carolina Population Center  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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Dr. Kenneth A. Bollen, H. R. Immerwahr Distinguished Professor  
Department of Sociology, Department of Psychology, & Carolina Population Center  
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