

cupc highlights

march 17, 2023

welcome our new CUPC affiliate

We are very excited to introduce to you our newest faculty affiliate [Laura Vargas](#), who is an Assistant Professor at CU Anschutz Medical Campus with the Dept. of Psychiatry, as well as a mental health practitioner working at the Refugee Mental Health Clinic, and the Stress, Trauma, Adversity Research, and Treatment (START) Center, both located at CU's School of Medicine.



Laura studies the impacts of violence and trauma on the mental health of migrant populations, focusing on Latinx immigrants in the U.S. She has expertise with social policy issues in Latin America through her past experiences as a social worker and prior research in Mexico and Brazil. She has an NIH K01 grant to conduct a field project with asylum seekers at the Texas border, where she is currently collecting data. Laura's lab is in the field, on the front lines, where she interviews vulnerable immigrants en route, fleeing their home countries.

Lucky for us, Laura will temporarily step away from the field and return to Colorado to share her harrowing stories of Latin Americans' journeys of fleeing poverty and violence on **April 3**, as part of the IBS/CUPC speaker series!

fun fact: *Laura has visited 20+ countries across 6 continents, and she doesn't plan to stop there! Born and raised in Mexico, Laura's family always opened their doors to passing migrants, which may explain where the passion for her work comes from.*



our researchers on the front lines of the U.S.-Mexico border

Interviewed by the CU Anschutz news department for their online media story [For Migrants, the Path to Happiness Often Carries a Traumatic Mental Toll](#), [Laura Vargas](#) explains about the **misconception among U.S. Americans that all migrants want to come to the United States:**

"Typically, 'plan A' for Latin Americans trying to flee violence and poverty is to first go to a different part of their own country, while 'plan B' is traveling to a neighboring country due to proximity and similarities in language and culture. If those choices prove unviable, then they might attempt 'plan C' – the risky journey north to the United States...The incredible thing about the people that I meet is that...they know they are going to be targets...Migrants will tell you, 'I know that I'm not welcomed and maybe I wouldn't blame these societies for not welcoming me, but I don't have a choice. I have to survive.'"

As we continue to teeter on the fence of the U.S.-Mexico border, we catch up with [Bertha Bermudez Tapia](#), who received her PhD from CU Boulder last year, and is now an Assistant Professor of Sociology at New Mexico State University. Like Laura Vargas, Bertha's on the front lines too, collecting data. Her newly published paper "[From Matamoros to Reynosa: Migrant Camps on the U.S.-Mexico Border](#)," featured in the ASA journal *CONTEXTS*, investigates

the rise, dismantling, and erasure of migrant camps, and the dehumanization of camp residents, including rape survivors.



media coverage

Take a bow [Jason Boardman](#) for a wonderful overview of your gene-environment research in the *A&S Magazine* article "[Study: High crime raises diabetes risk](#)," which covers Jason's recent work on the link between crime exposure and diabetes risk. "Genes matter," says Jason, "but how they are linked to your health depends on where you live."

recently published papers



Minors who feel the need to strategically travel to another state, such as Colorado, in order to seek legal, confidential abortion care, may still be faced with forced parental involvement or have to seek judicial bypass, which further delays care and may result in abortion denial, according to the findings of coauthors [Amanda Stevenson](#) and CU Anschutz affiliate [Kate Coleman-Minahan](#) in their newly published paper [Use of Judicial Bypass of Mandatory Parental Consent to Access Abortion and Judicial Bypass Denials, Florida and Texas, 2018–2021](#), in *American Journal of Public Health*.

Artificial intelligence is definitely getting a buzz these days, and may be the solution on how we can be more proactive in controlling the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, according to [Morteza Karimzadeh](#), in his recently published article "[Forecasting COVID-19 and Other Infectious Diseases for Proactive Policy: Artificial Intelligence Can Help](#)", from the *Journal of Urban Health*. Morteza discusses that reliable forecasts of the next local virus hotspot can help policymakers effectively allocate and implement resources. He also proposes areas of focus for future research, the Social Connectedness Index and hybrid models that integrate Deep Learning and SIR models, to further improve our forecasts. ~ thank you for your valuable work, Morteza!

Do you really know how wildfires impact your health? [Colleen Reid](#), [Priyanka deSouza](#), and their colleagues say maybe not, in their *Environmental Science & Technology* article "[Evaluation of Model-Based PM_{2.5} Estimates for Exposure Assessment during Wildfire Smoke Episodes in the Western U.S.](#)" PM_{2.5} is an air pollutant that can occur due to emissions from combustion of gasoline, oil, diesel fuel or wood and is a concern for people's health when levels are high. Colleen and her coauthors evaluate the accuracy of two commonly used machine-learning derived PM_{2.5} data sets. They

find that both models severely under-predict PM_{2.5} on high-pollution days and call for increased air pollution monitoring in the western US as well as wildfire specific indicators in the models.

*Note: Are you aware that CUPC has an incentive program to publish in **Demography**? Upon acceptance, CUPC will award the lead author \$1,000 in their research account and will also cover page charges! Simply contact Angela.Branson@colorado.edu upon acceptance. Also, feel free to reach out to CUPC Director Stefan.Leyk@colorado.edu or the Core Development Directors (Patrick.Krueger@ucdenver.edu, Boardman@colorado.edu, if you'd like input on draft manuscripts.*

newly funded CUPC SEED grants

Ladies and Gentlemen! Introducing the latest round of CUPC SEED awards, granted to the following outstanding investigators. And the envelope please!...(drum roll)...the recipients are:



Jessica Finlay and Colleen Reid: *Sustaining Improvements in Health Service Delivery and Health under Decentralization*

Jane Menken, Krister Andersson, and Alan Zarychta: *Sustaining Improvements in Health Service Delivery and Health under Decentralization Reform: Current and Future Collaborative Research in Honduras*

Christine Steeger: *Understanding Disparities in Nicotine and Cannabis Vaping among Youth*

Terry McCabe/John O'Loughlin (co-funded by CUPC and IBS): *Dynamics of climate change impacts in Kenya; Extending a panel survey to multiple livelihood, population, migration and ethnic contexts.*

~ CUPC is delighted to help jump-start these innovative projects!

invited talks and presentations

This week, the [Healthy Aging Program](#) at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver hosted **Jessica Finlay's** talk and visit. Jessica discussed "Cognability: An Ecological Theory of Neighborhoods and Cognitive Aging". She will also give a talk next week at the [2023 American Association of Geographers](#) (AAG) annual meeting, entitled "Big Qual: Methodological Strategies for In-Depth Large-Sample Qualitative Research," and chair a session on qualitative research since the COVID-19 pandemic onset. AAG is held this year in Denver, March 23-27.

Last month, **Lori Hunter** gave an invited virtual presentation to the U.S. Census Bureau's Demographic and Economic Studies Branch of their [Population Division](#), discussing "Environmental Change and Human Migration," sprinkled with examples from her own research.

CUPC proposal submissions

~ fingers crossed!

CUPC PI: Ryan Masters

Collaborator(s): Ilya Gutin (NAS), Bob Hummer (UNC, Chapel Hill), Steven Woolf (VA Commonwealth U.)

Project Title: The COVID-19 Pandemic and U.S. States' Life Expectancy Declines in 2020 and 2021

Funding Agency: NIH/NIA (R03 resubmission)

Amount Requested: \$152,403

CUPC PI: Jason Boardman

Lead Collaborator: Jennifer Robinette (Chapman U.), Bob Hummer (UNC, Chapel Hill)

Project Title: Beating the Odds: A Lifespan Approach to Identifying Cardiovascular Disease Risk

Funding Agency: NIH/NIA (R01 resubmission)

Amount Requested for CUPC: \$222,661



Mon, March 20, noon-1pm:

CUPC is proud to sponsor our next guest speaker [Aubrey Limburg](#), a survey statistician for the Enhancing Health Data (EHealth) Program of the U.S. Census Bureau, and a CU Boulder PhD Alumnus. Aubrey will be talking about *Enhancing the study of racial/ethnic disparities in health: A project linking Medicaid and Census Bureau data.*

Mon, April 3, noon-1pm:

As mentioned above, CUPC welcomes **Laura Vargas**, as she returns from the U.S.-Mexico border to share her research goals and progress on “Mental health and trauma exposure among recent Latinx immigrant adults.”



Need to smile? Just LOOK at this photo!

Heartwarming news: **Katie Massey Combs**, her husband Matthew, and son Tyler welcomed Josie into the world on February 8, 2023, weighing 7lbs 10oz.

~ Born with climbing shoes on, Josie plans to be a future rock climber, just like her Mom and Dad!

fun fact: Check out the Census Bureau’s [Population Clock in real time!](#)

*There is one birth every **9 seconds**, one death every **10 seconds**, one international migrant every **32 seconds**, and a net gain of one person every **22 seconds**.*