

FIU Community Engaged Research on COVID-19 Testing Among Underserved and Vulnerable Populations

Andrés Gil, Senior Vice President for Research

NIH Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics- Underserved Populations



**Study PI: Dr. Marianna Baum, Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work
Funding: NIH (\$4.3M)**

OBJECTIVES:

- Administer a culturally appropriate survey tailored to Black and Hispanic residents.
- Increase COVID-19 testing uptake (rt-PCR) among minority populations.
- Assess the impact of social determinants of health and other risk factors on COVID-19 testing and vaccine uptake/hesitancy.
- Determine exposure to COVID-19 among minorities.
- Assess vaccine uptake among minorities.
- Assess post-vaccination and post-infection antibody production and protection.

Current Results

Data Collection	N / %
Completed survey and tested for COVID-19	N=1,065
Had not been tested for COVID-19 prior to study	21.2%

Self-reported	N (%)
Ever positive	15.2%
COVID-19 severity	
Moderate	33.0%
Severe	33.0%
Ever hospitalized	31.5%
Vaccines	
At least 1 Dose	71.1%
Completed	66.0%
“Not likely to vaccinate”	11.0%

Results

- HIV+ show higher resilience during pandemic, more likely to engage in protective behaviors and vaccination.
- Food insecurity highly prevalent (1 in 3) and associated with lack of vaccination.
- Drug users more likely to be COVID-19 positive and unvaccinated.
- All vaccines show higher levels of antibodies and protection compared to uninfected/unvaccinated.

Study Implications

- Large sample presents opportunities for follow-ups and examine longitudinal impacts. Sample is currently at 1,300, with final sample expected at 1,600
- Vaccines are effective, and the proportion of those reluctant to be vaccinated is low (11%)
- There are implications related to vulnerable populations:
 - 1) Individuals that are substance users appear to be more likely to be COVID-19 positive and to not be vaccinated. The study is examining connections to substance abuse
 - 2) Individuals in lower socio-economic strata (represented by food insecurity) less likely to be vaccinated. Nevertheless, given the fact that sample represents vulnerable populations the vaccination rates are significant
 - 3) Individuals with health vulnerabilities more likely to be vaccinated



QUESTIONS?
THANK YOU