In addition to directing the HDCI Research Lab, Dr. Stephens is a NIH Global Health Equity Fellow, She also directs the Department of Psychology’s Global Health Study Abroad Program.

Join our collaborative and supportive research team.

As part of the Department of Psychology at Florida International University, the Health Disparities & Cultural Identities (HDCI) Lab’s research brings attention to the psychological and sociocultural factors influencing health outcomes across diverse communities.

We seek to identify factors that can in the help prevention of continued health disparities, particularly within understudied and marginalized communities. Our foci fall under three broad research areas: Health Disparities, Identity Development, and Culture. Research topics we have explored include sexually transmitted infections (e.g. HPV, HIV/ AIDS), identity development (e.g. gender, racial/ ethnic, cultural) intimate partner violence (verbal aggression, revenge porn, global contexts), and popular culture influences (e.g. Hip Hop, Reality TV).
RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Working in the HDCI lab gives undergraduate students a hands-on opportunity to see what doing research is all about. You will be part of the research team and will have an opportunity to engage in a variety of research processes. More importantly, it can be helpful in preparing students for graduate school or academic career!

Being a member of the HDCI lab team involves much more than "volunteering". Everyone plays an active role and is taught to contribute to all aspects of the research process including:

- collecting and entering data,
- leading focus group or individual interviews,
- interview transcription
- scheduling research participant site visits
- preparing literature reviews,
- preparing institutional review board proposals
- submitting conference proposals
- peer reviewed journal article preparation

Course Credit & Honors Thesis

After working in the lab for a semester, students can register for Independent Research course credit for their work. Taking Independent Research credits is required for those students planning to complete an Honors Thesis (required to graduate with Honors in Psychology). Students earning credit work in close collaboration with Dr. Stephens to develop a research project using lab data. These results are often presented at conferences or submitted for publication in a journal.

ABOUT THE HDCI LAB

The health of racial and ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged groups in the United States health system is significantly worse than of other populations. In our lab we seek to identify sociocultural and psychological factors influencing some of the differential sexual health outcomes. Our recent study outcomes highlight the importance of gender and racial/ethnic identity, familial processes, and media influences on behavioral outcomes.

Dr. Dionne Stephens, the Director of the HDCI Lab, is an Associate Professor in the Psychology Department at FIU. Collaborations with faculty from other programs and institutions are central to her work. These interdisciplinary connections provide HDCI research assistants with useful opportunities to network with a range of scholars across disciplines.

GRADUATE/ MEDICAL SCHOOL SKILLS & PORTFOLIO CONTENT

Undergraduate research assistants trained in our lab are well prepared for graduate school, and are given opportunities to earn recognition for their work. Past undergraduate research assistants have presented at conferences, co-authored manuscripts, and won various prestigious research awards and fellowships. The vast majority are now in graduate programs across the country!