ABOUT THE HDCI LAB
The health of racial and ethnic minorities, poor people, and other disadvantaged groups in the United States health is significantly worse than the rates of other groups. 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, holds a joint appointment in the FIU Department of Psychology and the African Diaspora Studies Program. In addition, we often collaborate with faculty from other institutions. These interdisciplinary connections provide HDCI research assistants with opportunities to work and network with a range of scholars across disciplines.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES
Working in the HDCI lab gives 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 an academic career!

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
The HDCI lab is committed to providing graduate students with educational and professional experience, significant responsibility that expands with experience, and a congenial team atmosphere.

Graduate students take on leadership roles in our research studies. This would include developing research studies relevant to the lab’s focus, managing current research studies, and mentoring undergraduate research assistants. Graduate students are also encouraged to engage in discipline based activities, such as presenting research at professional conferences, submitting manuscripts for publication, and developing their own areas of research specialization— all important components of professional development.

Graduate students interested in working in the HDCI lab should contact Dr. Stephens. Graduate students are eligible for assistantships through the Department of Psychology (psych.fiu.edu).

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
A small number of undergraduate students are accepted into the HDCI lab each year. Students are required to complete an application (see HDCI website) and then meet with Dr. Stephens to discuss their goals. Acceptance of students is typically based upon the quality of the interview and the current needs of the lab (i.e. space availability, skills required, location of student).

Undergraduate students work 5 hours a week in the lab on such tasks as collecting and entering data, leading focus group interviews, preparing literature reviews, transcribing focus group interviews, scheduling site visits, and assisting in the preparation of grant applications. After a semester of working in the lab, students may request to take Independent Research or Honors Thesis credits for the time they put into the research lab. Students should speak to Dr. Stephens at least half way through the preceding semester if they are interested.

Past HDCI undergraduate research assistants have presented at conferences, co–authored peer reviewed manuscripts, and won various prestigious research awards and fellowships. They are now in graduate programs across the country!
Welcome to the Health Disparities & Cultural Identities (HDCI) Lab!
As part of the Department of Psychology at Florida International University, our research brings attention to the ways psychological and sociocultural factors affect the health outcomes in diverse communities across the lifespan.

A key goal of our work is to identify factors that can help prevent continued health disparities. We primarily examine health outcomes in racial/ethnic minority populations. Some of the issues we have explored in the HDCI lab include media influences, sexual violence, HPV vaccination and HIV/AIDS.

A select number of students are accepted into the lab as research assistants annually. In addition to conducting research, students engage in professional development activities including making conference presentations, preparing manuscripts, and applying for academic awards and scholarships. We want to ensure that our students gain the skills and tools needed for graduate school and academic careers.

http://www.fiu.edu/~stephens/Lab.htm