



MRDRC Newsletter | Winter 2021 | 22(1)

Director's corner



John Laitner

As we begin the new calendar year, this newsletter presents the MRDRC list of

research projects for fiscal year 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately remains with us and, not surprisingly, no fewer than five of the 19 new projects focus on its effects.

Several of these projects will examine direct implications on the Social Security System itself. For example, Lauren Nicholas and Nancy Early, in UM22-01, will use Social

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MRDRC adds 19 projects for Fiscal Year 22

Many of MRDRC's FY22 projects touch on gender and racial disparities as well as COVID-19. Hypertext numbers link to the project's abstract. The 19 projects are:

Tracking Changes in the Composition of Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplement Security Income Following the COVID-19 Pandemic; Lauren Nicholas, Nancy Early; [UM22-01](#)

Retirement Pensions and Disability Insurance for the 21st Century; Tom Zawisza; [UM22-02](#)

The Effect of the Americans with Disabilities Act on Supplemental Security Income; Timothy Moore; [UM22-03](#)

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The Role of Physical, Cognitive, and Interpersonal Occupational Requirements and Working Conditions on Disability and Retirement; Italo Lopez-Garcia, Kathleen Mullen, Jeff Wenger; [UM22-04](#)

How Will COVID-19 Excess Mortality Affect Social Security Benefit Payouts?; Leora Friedberg, Anthony Webb, Irena Dushi; [UM22-05](#)

Nontraditional Work, Nontraditional Workers, and the Implications for Social Security; Kathryn Edwards; [UM22-06](#)

The Effect of COVID-19 on Expected and Actual Labor Supply and Social Security Claiming Among Older Workers; Michael Hurd, Péter Hudomiet, Susann Rohwedder; [UM22-07](#)

Gendered Impacts of COVID-19 on Economic and Retirement Security; Jeremy Burke, María Prados; [UM22-08](#)

Risk of Large Medical Expenditures at Older Ages and Their Impact on Economic Well-being; Susann Rohwedder, Péter Hudomiet, Michael Hurd; [UM22-09](#)

How Does Social Security Affect the Racial Wealth Gap?; John Sabelhaus; [UM22-10](#)

The Effect of Racial Disparities on Entitlement to Social Security Survivor Benefit and Widow Poverty; Leora Friedberg, Anthony Webb; [UM22-11](#)

Disparities in Social Security Knowledge and the Role of Social Capital; Katherine Carman, Jhacova Williams; [UM22-12](#)

The Dynamic Effects of Health on the Employment of Older Workers: Impacts by Gender, Education, and Race; Richard Blundell, Jack Britton, Monica Costa Dias, Stephanie de Mel, Eric French; [UM22-13](#)


An Analysis of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Knowledge about Social Security Programs and Their Consequences; David Knapp, Francisco Perez-Arce; [UM22-14](#)

Investigating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Provision of Workplace Accommodations; Andrew Houtenville, Megan Henly, Debra Brucker; [UM22-15](#)

Work and Retirement for Older Black and Hispanic Adults; Emma Aguila; [UM22-16](#)

The Ongoing Impacts of COVID-19 on Americans' Economic Security; Marco Angrisani, Jeremy Burke, Arie Kapteyn; [UM22-17](#)

Understanding Racial Disparities in Financial Preparedness for Retirement; Junjie Guo, Ananth Seshadri; [UM22-18](#)

Labor-Market Shocks and Historically-Disadvantaged Groups' Access to SSI and SSDI; Ariel Burstein, Gordon Hanson, Jonathan Vogel, Richard Chard; [UM22-19](#) 

News from MRDRC researchers

Journal articles

In August, *Economic Modelling* published Dmitriy Stolyarov. and Linda L. Tesar's article, ["Interest rate trends in a global context,"](#) based on the authors' MRDRC paper of the same name, [WP 2019-402](#).

Eric French, Jeremy McCauley, Karolos Arapakis, and Eric Brunner recently published ["Dementia and disadvantage in the USA and England: population-based comparative study"](#) in *BMJ Open*. The article acknowledges funding from MRDRC, among others.


The December issue of *Journal of Health Economics* includes Péter Hudomiet, Michael D.Hurd, and Susann Rohwedder article, ["Forecasting mortality inequalities in the U.S. based on trends in midlife health."](#) The authors acknowledge MRDRC support for the trio's projects, [UM19-04](#) and [UM20-04](#), "Forecasting Survival by Socioeconomic Status and Implications for Social Security Benefits," years one and two

Gema Zamarro's article, ["Alternative measures of non-cognitive skills and their effect on retirement preparation and financial capability,"](#) appeared in the October issue of the *Journal of Pension Economics & Finance*. It is

based on her 2017 MRDRC project of the same name, [UM17-12](#)

Media mentions


Kiplinger writer Dan Brooks refers to María J. Prados and Arie Kapteyn's [2019 MRDRC working paper](#) in ["4 Big Retirement Blunders \(and How to Avoid Them\)."](#)

Nerd Wallet's Liz Weston interviewed Lauren Nicholas for an October article titled ["Money Mistakes Could Signal Dementia Risk."](#) Weston cited Nicholas' 2020 JAMA article, co-authored with Kenneth M. Langa and Julie P. W. Bynum, which drew on Nicholas' MRDRC project with Joanne Hsu, ["Adverse Financial Events Before and After Dementia Diagnosis: Understanding the Timing and Need for Assistance Managing Money Among Households Impacted by Dementia."](#) The *Nerd Wallet* piece was picked up by the *AP* and the *Washington Post*, among other media outlets. 

Researchers are encouraged to share academic publications, media coverage, and conference presentations of their MRRC/MRDRC-funded work. Please send announcements to mrdrumich@umich.edu.

Security administrative data to study the effects of COVID-19 on SSDI participation. Likewise, Leora Friedberg, Anthony Webb, and Irena Dushi, in UM22-05, will use administrative data and other sources to investigate the impact of excess mortality, from COVID-19, on Social Security benefit payments.

Other projects, however, will examine the impacts of COVID-19 on the behavior of individuals and households. For instance, Michael Hurd, Péter Hudomiet, and Susann Rohwedder (UM22-07) will use HRS data to study COVID-19-induced transitions out of work or to different jobs. In UM22-08, Jeremy Burke and María Prados will focus specifically on women's labor market experiences. And, Marco Angrisani, Jeremy Burke, and Arie Kapteyn (UM22-17) will use the Understanding America Study, an internet panel, to ask how COVID-19 is affecting households' saving behavior, retirement expectations, and well-being.

Many other interesting topics remain, of course, including COVID-19's effects on children's schooling, on adults' desire and ability to work from home, and on small businesses and, in particular, parts of the service sector. 



The Michigan Retirement and Disability Research Center is supported by a cooperative agreement with the Social Security Administration.

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