

Emory University Department of Anthropology

DR. ANGELA GARCIA

SOCIAL DISPARITIES IN HEALTH: WHAT DRIVES VARIATION IN DISEASE RISK BETWEEN AND WITHIN POPULATIONS?



Dr. Angela Garcia is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Center of Evolution and Medicine at Arizona State University. Her work is situated at the intersection of human biology, evolutionary medicine, and anthropology, and investigates how social disparities impact endocrine and immune physiology, and the adverse impact this has on health. Her research program combines fieldwork, bench-based laboratory research, and state-of-the-art statistical analysis on diverse types of data, including individual and household-level interviews, hormonal and immune biomarkers, and genomic data.

Dr. Garcia uses a life history framework and a multilevel systems biology approach to explore how psychosocial and environmental factors (e.g. perceptions of stress, inequality, pathogen exposure) interact with physiological (e.g. hormones and immune) and genomic (transcriptomic and genetic) processes, to determine patterns of health and disease within and between populations. Much of her recent work was conducted in a new field site she developed in Honduras, working with immigrant women facing both high levels of discrimination and poor health outcomes. This research focuses on the pathways through which psychosocial stressors like discrimination relate to metabolic risk via influences on neuroendocrine-immune regulatory interactions. Her current and future research aims at disentangling the influences of social and ecological stress on neuroendocrine-immune signaling to understand the rise of cardiometabolic disease in Latino populations and the emergence of intergenerational cycles of health disparity.

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