

CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research

Research Agenda-Setting Paper

This paper was written to help advance convergence-oriented research in the hazards and disaster field. It highlights areas where additional research could contribute new knowledge to the response to and recovery from the pandemic and other disasters yet to come. Questions about the research topics and ethical and methodological issues highlighted here should be directed to the authors who contributed to this paper.

Working Group Name:

COVID-19 and Black Communities

Working Group Description:

As cities like Chicago, Detroit, and New Orleans have begun to release COVID-19 death rates disaggregated by race and ethnicity, it is increasingly clear that Black individuals and communities are among the hardest hit by the pandemic. Our Working Group is interested in investigating the impacts of COVID-19 on Black communities in the U.S. and globally.

Priority Research Topics and Specific Research Questions:

Priority Research Topics	Potential Research Questions
1. Health Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are members of Black communities communicating within and across communities about COVID-19? • How do these varieties of communication relate to formal channels of communication maintained by public health agencies and other institutions of the U.S. government? • What general themes emerge from qualitative analysis of content created by Black people that targets Black audiences?
2. COVID19 Aid Distribution in Guyana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What metrics has the Guyanese government used to guide the distribution of aid to vulnerable populations in its national COVID-19 response? • How could existing social vulnerability indices, such as SoVI and the CDC Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), be adapted to better understand and identify vulnerable populations in Guyana? • How can the Guyanese government and citizenry's attentiveness to social vulnerability during COVID 19 be leveraged to improve disaster response and recovery processes in future disasters of all types?
3. Faith, Grief, and Mourning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the methods and practices of worship and mourning in Black communities being impacted by COVID-19?

4. Behavioral Public Administration and Policy

- What risk factors impact how Black people are affected by and respond to COVID-19?
- How do risk perceptions impact how Black people respond to COVID-19?

Ethical / Methodological Considerations:

Black communities have long been studied by researchers with minimal, if any, compensation to the communities for the extracted data and resources. There is an embedded power differential in the relationship between communities and outside researchers. As Black scholars, we are partially disrupting the relationship as we are insiders, insider-outsiders, and/or allies to the communities that we are working with on these projects. We will also partner with communities to create popular education tools based on our research, as deemed useful by them.

Projects will include various methods such as online questionnaires and analysis of social media data. We will respect established norms regarding privacy by restricting data collection to publicly available data, de-identifying any and all personal user information, and reporting analysis findings in aggregation. Exceptions to this aggregation/de-identification format is limited to public record of public figure statements, in accordance with human subjects research best practices and guidelines.

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This COVID-19 Working Group effort was supported by the National Science Foundation-funded Social Science Extreme Events Research (SSEER) network and the CONVERGE facility at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder (NSF Award #1841338). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF, SSEER, or CONVERGE.