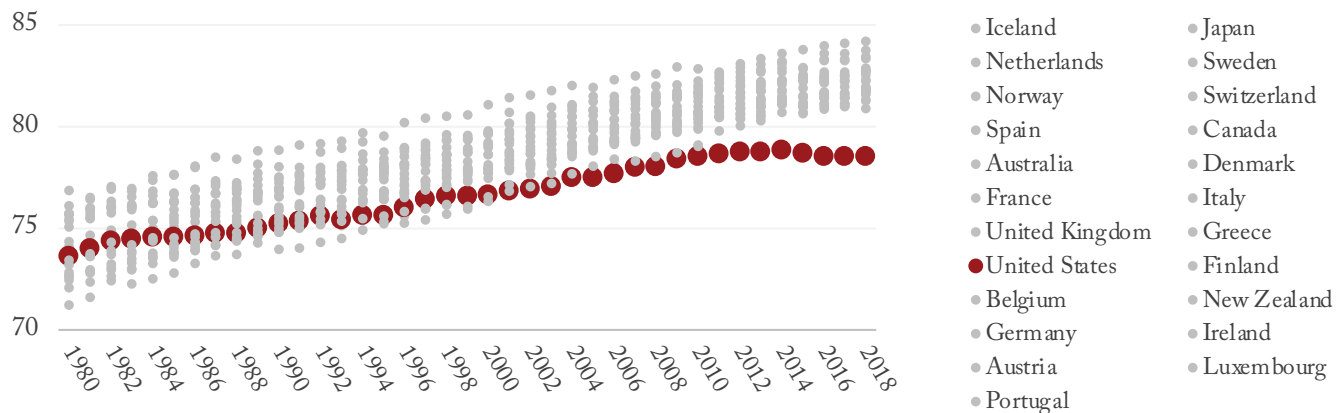


USC ranks 4th among American universities in federal support for Social and Behavioral Research. Much of this research is devoted to studying issues of aging. USC has several Centers supported by the **National Institute on Aging (NIA)** one of the National Institutes of Health.

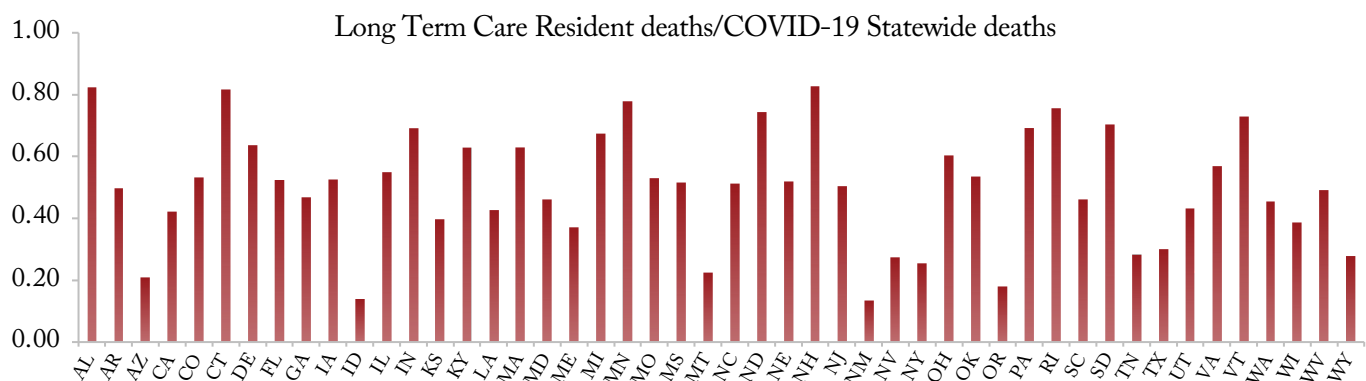
USC/UCLA Center on Biodemography and Population Health has a focus on trends in health and inequality in health or how social and economic factors get under the skin to affect aging and explain “earlier aging of people with low education and members of minorities. Two findings from this work below:

Poor Performance of American Life expectancy. In 1980 life expectancy for the US was in the middle of OECD countries. Today we rank 36th in the world.



Black and Hispanic Americans “age faster” than non-Hispanic whites. **On average an African American at any age over 56 is physiologically 1.8 years “older”, an average Hispanic 1.6 years “older” than a non-Hispanic white.** The race/ethnic differences are “explained” by differences in socioeconomic status. This is based on 22 indicators of physiology similar to what would be collected in a thorough doctor visit which are collected in the **Health and Retirement Study (HRS)**, a major national study on many aging issues supported by the NIA (Farina et al. 2021).

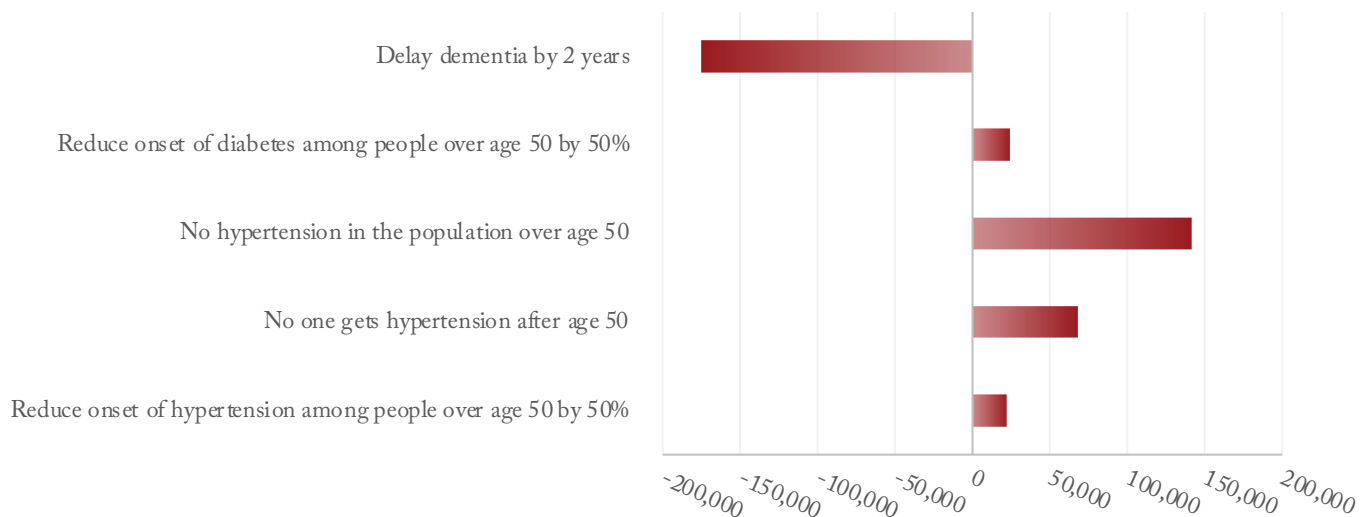
Covid deaths at older ages are so much higher because of biological and social reasons: decreased functioning of the immune system, dysregulated inflammation, chronic conditions (based on the **HRS**), and residence in long term care facilities. The figure below shows the high proportion of Covid deaths occurring among people in Long Term Care settings by state as of mid June (Crimmins 2020).



USC is the site of 3 Centers supported by NIA that focus on **Alzheimer's disease**, 2 are in the social sciences. One is a **Center for Advancing Sociodemographic and Economic Study of AD** and the other is a **Research Center for Minority Aging with a focus on AD** and training minority scholars. Reports from these Centers include the following findings.

Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to have a delay in clinical dementia diagnosis after cognitive decline (using **HRS/Medicare** claims linked data) (Chen et al.) and after AD diagnosis, Hispanics and Asians are less likely than whites to have a follow up visit with an AD specialist (Drabo et al., 2019).

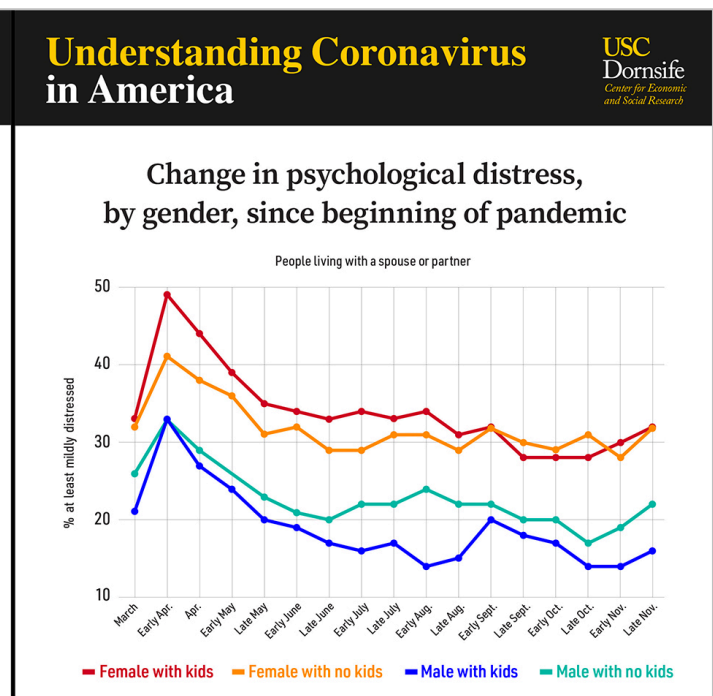
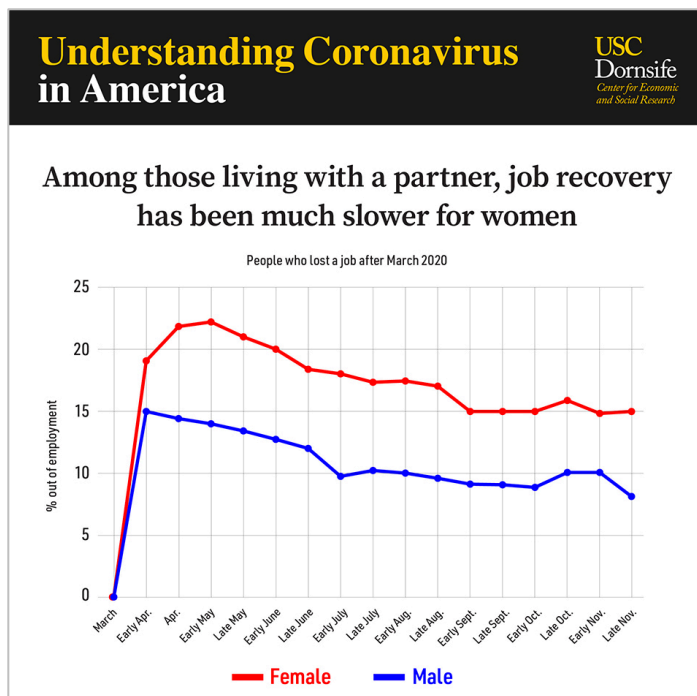
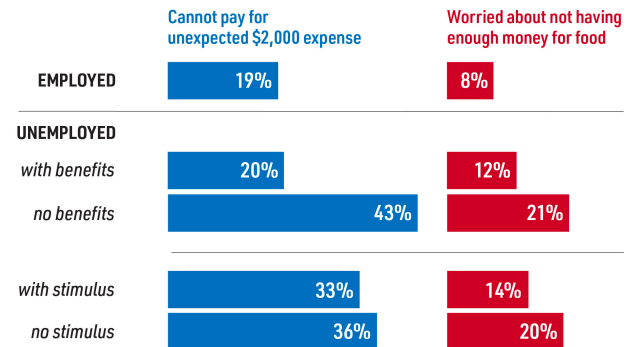
Results from a simulation model based on the **HRS** clarify that the way to reduce the prevalence of Alzheimer's is to directly treat to prevent or delay Alzheimer's. You cannot treat other related conditions in the population (e.g. diabetes and hypertension) as has been suggested by some. Reduction in diabetes and hypertension increases rather than decreases AD in the population (Zissimopoulos et al. 2018).



There are two **Roybal Centers** at USC. The **USC Edward R. Roybal Institute on Aging** focuses on minority aging in the many ethnic groups making up California's population. It has a focus on topics such as **Elder Abuse and Mistreatment, Caregiving** (e.g Train the Trainer Program for Asian and Pacific Islander Community), and **COVID** (Level of Covid in the Black Population). An NIA supported **USC Roybal Center for Behavioral Interventions in Aging** attempts to figure out how to “nudge” people into healthy behaviors. For instance, text messages sent prior to a primary care visit can boost flu vaccination rates by up to 11% (Sparks, 2021). Jason Doctor has recently received an NIH grant under the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics Underserved Populations Initiative (**RADx UP**) to focus on COVID testing for underserved populations in downtown and south LA. He is conducting a randomized experiment on 2,160 individuals (540 families) to evaluate the effectiveness of messaging and incentives to facilitate repeat testing for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies.

The Center for Economic and Social Research at USC conducts the “The Understanding America Study”, a large national internet panel, which was the first representative study in the country to start tracking the effects of the **COVID pandemic**. Their data provide the only continuous record since early March 2020 of how American families have fared during this crisis. Some 250 teams of researchers and policy makers around the world are using the data now, and results have been part of more than 430 stories in the media so far.

Economic and food insecurity is significantly greater for those who aren't getting unemployment benefits



The figure above shows the values of unemployment and stimulus benefits in reducing economic and food insecurity. The bottom figures show how fast unemployment and psychological distress rose at the beginning of the pandemic and how slow they have been to recover, especially for women.

Multidisciplinary Training in Gerontology for predoctoral and postdoctoral students at USC is supported by an **NIA Training Grant**. Multidisciplinary research in aging is being supported by a **Nathan Shock Center in Aging** which is building the field of Geroscience combining work in human aging with work in the biology of aging.