

RACHEL DONNELLY

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EMPLOYMENT

2019-present Assistant Professor of Sociology, Vanderbilt University
2023-present Faculty Affiliate, Center for Research on Inequality and Health, Vanderbilt University

EDUCATION

2019 Ph.D., Sociology, The University of Texas at Austin
Specialization in Demography
Doctoral Minors: Applied Statistical Modeling; Aging and Health
2015 M.A., Sociology, The University of Texas at Austin
2013 B.A., Sociology, The University of Texas at Austin

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS (*graduate student at time of publication; †equal authorship)

Donnelly, Rachel†, Mateo P. Farina†, and Jessica Faul. Forthcoming. “How “Clocking In” Ages Us: An Examination of Work History, Work Quality, and Accelerated Epigenetic Aging in Older Adulthood.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*.

Donnelly, Rachel, Whitney Frierson*, Zhe Zhang*, and Courtney E. Boen. Forthcoming. “State-level Paid Sick Leave Policies and Population Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States” *Society and Mental Health*. Online First.

Donnelly, Rachel and Mateo P. Farina. 2025. “Mapping Mental Health across U.S. States: The Role of Economic and Social Support Policies.” *Milbank Quarterly* 103(S1):16-31.

Donnelly, Rachel. 2025. “Job Insecurity as a Predictor of Gray Divorce: A Gendered Dyadic Analysis.” *Social Forces* 103(3):928-947

Donnelly, Rachel and Adam K. Schoenbachler*. 2025. “The Mental Health of Essential Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Role of State-level Policies.” *Society and Mental Health* 15(1):17-38.

Donnelly, Rachel, Brazil Remani*, and Christy L. Erving. 2023. “Dual Pandemics? Assessing Associations Between Area Racism, COVID-19 Case Rates, and Mental Health Among U.S. Adults.” *Social Science & Medicine – Mental Health* 4:100248.

Farina, Mateo P., Zhe Zhang*, and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2023. “Anticipatory Stress, State Policy Contexts, and Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Social Science & Medicine – Population Health* 23:101415.

Mai, Quan D., Lijun Song, and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2023. "Precarious Employment and Well-being: Insights from the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Work and Occupations* 50(1): 3-21.

Donnelly, Rachel, Zhiyong Lin, and Debra Umberson. 2023 "Parental Death Across the Life Course, Social Isolation, and Health in Later Life: Racial/ethnic Disadvantage in the U.S." *Social Forces* 102(2):586-608.

- Recipient of the Outstanding Paper Award, American Sociological Association Section on Aging and the Life Course

Umberson, Debra and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2023. "Social Isolation: An Unequally Distributed Health Hazard." *Annual Review of Sociology* 49:379-399.

Donnelly, Rachel, Michael A. Garcia*, Hyungmin Cha*, Robert A. Hummer, Debra Umberson. 2023. "Exposure to Family Member Deaths Across the Life Course for Hispanic Individuals." *Demography* 60(2):539-562.

Donnelly, Rachel, Hyungmin Cha*, and Debra Umberson. 2022. "Multiple Family Member Deaths and Cardiometabolic Health among Black and White Older Adults." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 63(4):610-625.

Donnelly, Rachel, Rachel Zajdel*, and Mateo P. Farina. 2022. "Inequality in Household Job Insecurity and Mental Health: Changes During the COVID-19 Pandemic" *Work and Occupations* 49(4):457-482.

Umberson, Debra and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2022. "The Death of a Child and Parents' Psychological Distress in Mid to Later Life: Racial/Ethnic Differences in Exposure and Vulnerability." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 77(8):1561-1570.

Donnelly, Rachel. 2022. "Precarious Work in Midlife: Long-term Implications for the Health and Mortality of Women and Men." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 63(1): 142-158.

Donnelly, Rachel. 2021. "Precarious Work and Health: Do Occupation- and State-specific Unemployment Rates Matter for Women and for Men?" *Social Science & Medicine – Population Health* 16:100967

Donnelly, Rachel and Adam Schoenbachler*. 2021. "Part-time Work and Health in the United States: The Role of State Policies." *Social Science & Medicine – Population Health* 15:100891

Donnelly, Rachel and Mateo P. Farina. 2021. "How Do State Policies Shape Experiences of Household Income Shocks and Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic?" *Social Science & Medicine* 269:113557.

- Marteletto, Leticia J., Molly Dondero, Jennifer Van Hook, Luiz C.D. Gama, and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2021. "Intersections of Adolescent Well-being: School, Work, and Weight Status in Brazil." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(1):69-84.
- Pollitt, Amanda M., **Rachel Donnelly**, Sara E. Mernitz, and Debra Umberson. 2020. "Differences in How Spouses Influence Each Other's Alcohol Use in Same- and Different-Sex Marriages: A Daily Diary Study." *Social Science & Medicine* 264:113398.
- Umberson, Debra, **Rachel Donnelly**, Minle Xu, Matthew Farina*, and Michael A. Garcia*. 2020. "Death of a Child Prior to Midlife, Dementia Risk, and Racial Disparities." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 75(9):1983-1995
- Donnelly, Rachel**, Debra Umberson, Robert A. Hummer, and Michael A. Garcia*. 2020. "Race, Death of a Child, and Mortality Risk among Aging Parents in the United States." *Social Science & Medicine* 249:112853.
- Donnelly, Rachel**, Debra Umberson, and Tetyana Pudrovska. 2020. "Family Member Death, and Subjective Life Expectancy Among Black and White Older Adults." *Journal of Aging and Health* 32(3-4): 143-153.
- Behler, Rachel, **Rachel Donnelly**, and Debra Umberson. 2019. "Psychological Distress Transmission in Same-Sex and Different-Sex Marriages." *Journal of Health & Social Behavior* 60(1):18-35.
- Donnelly, Rachel**, Brandon A. Robinson, and Debra Umberson. 2019. "Can Spouses Buffer the Impact of Discrimination on Depressive Symptoms? An Examination of Same-sex and Different-sex Marriages." *Society and Mental Health* 9(2):192-210.
- Donnelly, Rachel** and Leticia Marteletto. 2018. "Gender, Socioeconomic Status, and Diet Behaviors within Brazilian Families." *Socius* 4:1-11.
- Umberson, Debra, **Rachel Donnelly**, and Amanda Pollitt. 2018. "Marriage, Social Control, and Health Behavior: A Dyadic Analysis of Same-Sex and Different-Sex Couples." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59(3):429-446.
- Holway, Giuseppina Valle, Debra Umberson, and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2018. "Health and Health Behavior Concordance between Spouses in Same-Sex and Different-Sex Marriages." *Social Currents* 5(4): 319-327
- Donnelly, Rachel**, Debra Umberson, and Rhiannon A. Kroeger. 2018. "Childhood Adversity, Daily Stress, and Marital Strain in Same-Sex and Different-Sex Marriages." *Journal of Family Issues* 39(7): 2085-2106.
- Thomeer, Mieke Beth, **Rachel Donnelly**, Corinne Reczek, and Debra Umberson. 2017. "Planning for Future Care and the End of Life: A Qualitative Analysis of Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Couples." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 58(4): 473-487.

Umberson, Debra, Julie Skalamera Olson, Robert Crosnoe, Hui Liu, Tetyana Pudrovska, and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2017. "Death of Family Members as an Overlooked Source of Racial Disadvantage in the United States." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114(5):915-920.

Umberson, Debra, Mieke Beth Thomeer, Rhiannon A. Kroeger, Corinne Reczek, and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2017. "Instrumental- and Emotion-Focused Care Work During Physical Health Events: Comparing Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Marriages." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 72(3): 498-509

Umberson, Debra, Mieke Beth Thomeer, Corinne Reczek, and **Rachel Donnelly**. 2016. "Physical Illness in Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Marriages: Gendered Dyadic Experiences." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 57(4): 517-531.

Donnelly, Rachel and Andrew Springer. 2015. "Parental Social Support, Ethnicity, and Energy Balance-Related Behaviors in Ethnically Diverse, Low Income, Urban Elementary Schoolchildren." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 47(1): 10-18.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Donnelly, Rachel, Corinne Reczek, and Debra Umberson. 2019. "What We Know (And Don't Know) About the Bereavement Experiences of Same-Sex Spouses." Pp. 109-131 in *LGBTQ Divorce and Relationship Dissolution: Psychological and Legal Perspectives and Implications for Practice*. A.E. Goldberg and A. Romero (Eds). Oxford University Press.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Donnelly, Rachel, Zhe Zhang*, Mateo P. Farina, and Blake Powell*. "Structuralizing the Stress Process: States as Contextual Determinants of Stress and Mental Health." *Revise & Resubmit*.

Donnelly, Rachel, Blake Powell*, and Mieke Beth Thomeer. "State Policy Contexts and the Risk of Divorce: Variation by Race/ethnicity and Gender." *Under Review*.

Donnelly, Rachel, Adam K. Schoenbachler, Emily C. Dore. "State Social Safety Net Context in Early Life and Cognitive Function in Later Life." *Under Review*.

Margaret T. Hicken, Reed DeAngelis, David Rigby, Lindsey Burnside, Sara Adar, Sarah Burgard, Brigitte Davis, **Rachel Donnelly**, Jessica Finlay, Anjum Hajat, Jinkook Lee, Brea Perry, Lorna Thorpe, Debra Umberson. "The social environment and cognitive aging over the life course: Concepts and research needs." *Under Review*.

RESEARCH BRIEFS, OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Donnelly, Rachel. August 2, 2022. "All Work is Not Created Equal: The Lasting Health Consequences of Precarious Work." The Society Pages, Council on Contemporary

Families. <https://thesocietypages.org/ccf/2022/08/02/all-work-in-not-created-equal-the-lasting-health-consequences-of-precarious-work/>

Donnelly, Rachel and Mateo P. Farina. April 14, 2021. “State Policies Matter for Mental Health During COVID-19.” Public Health Post. <https://www.publichealthpost.org/research/state-policies-matter-for-mental-health-during-covid-19/>

Donnelly, Rachel and Debra Umberson. September 1, 2020. “Loss and Grief Caused by Systemic Racism Can Be Felt Most by the Black Community.” OpEd, The Tennessean. <https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2020/09/01/black-community-suffers-most-systemic-racism/5681103002/>

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Active

- 2025-2027 “Occupation and Labor Force Participation across the Life Course: Implications for Cognitive Functioning in Later Life.” (Role: MPI with Lucie Kalousová). Vanderbilt University Seeding Success Grant. Total costs: \$60,435.
- 2024-2026 “Racial Inequities in ADRD: The Role of Life Course Stress Exposure and Policy Environments.” (Role: PI). National Institutes of Health Loan Repayment Program.

Pending

- “Understanding How State Contexts Across the Life Course Shape ADRD Risk Among Older Adults.” (Role: PI). National Institutes of Health. R01. Total costs requested: \$2,008,020.
- “Occupation and Labor Force Participation across the Life Course: Implications for Cognitive Functioning in Later Life.” (Role: MPI with Lucie Kalousová). National Institutes of Health. R03. Total costs requested: \$317,000.

Completed

- 2024-2025 “Understanding How State Social Safety Nets in Early Life Shape Educational Attainment and ADRD Risk for Black and White Older Adults.” (Role: PI). EdDem Network Pilot Project. Subaward from NIA R24AG077433. Total costs: \$39,479.
- 2021-2024 “Inequalities in Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Interplay of Individual Pandemic Stressors and State Sociopolitical Contexts” (Role: PI). National Institutes of Health. R03MH128649. Total costs: \$174,311
- 2024 Conference Fellow. CAPS-CPR Conference on U.S. State Policies, Population Health, and Aging. Syracuse University.
- 2020 University of Southern California & National Institute on Aging, Science of Alzheimer’s Disease & Related Dementias for Social Scientists Program

- 2018-2019 “Precarious Employment and Health Outcomes” (Role: Co-PI with Umberson).
National Science Foundation, Dissertation Research Improvement Grant,
1802628. Total costs: \$11,999.
- 2017 U.S. Policy Communication Fellow, Population Reference Bureau
- 2016, 2017 Travel Grant, National Bureau of Economic Research Cohort Studies Meeting
- 2015, 2016 NICHD Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award; Predoctoral
Research Traineeship, Population Research Center, University of Texas at Austin

HONORS & AWARDS

- 2025 Outstanding Paper Award, American Sociological Association Section on Aging
and the Life Course
- 2023-2025 Vanderbilt University Dean’s Faculty Fellow
- 2018 Norval Glenn Paper Award Honorable Mention, University of Texas at Austin
- 2017, 2018 Sociology Excellence Award, University of Texas at Austin

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

- “Structuralizing the Stress Process: States as Contextual Determinants of Stress and Mental Health.” Institute for Health Equity & Center for Advanced Research on Mental Health and Society, McMaster University. November 2024.
- “Structuralizing the Stress Process: States as Contextual Determinants of Stress and Mental Health.” Department of Sociology, Vanderbilt University. October 2024.
- “Population Mental Health: The Intersection of Individual Experiences and State Sociopolitical Environments.” Population Research Center, University of Texas. February 2024.
- “Racial Inequality in Life Course Exposure to the Death of Family Members: Consequences for Health and Well-being” University of Texas at Austin, Summit on Race and the Unequal Burden of Bereavement. May 2022
- “Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Interplay of Individual Stressors and State Sociopolitical Contexts.” Department of Psychiatry, Vanderbilt University. February 2022.

Selected Conference Presentations

Donnelly, Rachel and Blake Powell. "State Policy Contexts and Marital Dissolution." Presented at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association. Chicago, IL. August 2025.

Donnelly, Rachel and Adam Schoenbachler. "State Social Safety Net Context in Early Life and ADRD Risk for Older Adults." Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Washington, DC. April 2025.

Donnelly, Rachel, Zhe Zhang, and Mateo P. Farina. "Integrating Contextual Influences of Mental Health: States as a Social Context of the Stress Process." Presented at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association. Montreal, Canada. August 2024.

Farina, Mateo P. and **Rachel Donnelly**. "Work History, Work Quality, and Accelerated Aging Among Older Adults." Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Columbus, OH. April 2024.

Donnelly, Rachel, Zhiyong Lin, Debra Umberson. "Parental Death Across the Life Course, Social Isolation, and Health in Later Life: Racial Disadvantage in the United States" Presented at the Gerontological Society of America annual meeting. Indianapolis, IN. November 2022.

Donnelly, Rachel and Adam K. Schoenbachler. "The Mental Health of Essential Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Role of State-level Policies." Presented at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association. Los Angeles, CA. August 2022.

Donnelly, Rachel. "Gender, Precarious Work, and Divorce in Mid- to Later-life: A Dyadic Analysis." Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Atlanta, GA. April 2022.

Donnelly, Rachel. "Life Course Bereavement and Health Outcomes for Aging Adults." Presented at the Interdisciplinary Association for Public Health Science conference. Online. October 2021.

Donnelly, Rachel, Rachel Zajdel, and Mateo P. Farina. "Inequality in Household Income Shocks During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Consequences for Mental Health." Presented at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association. Online. August 2021.

Donnelly, Rachel and Mateo P. Farina. "How Do State Policies Shape Experiences of Household Job Loss and Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic?" Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Online. May 2021.

Donnelly, Rachel and Debra Umberson. "Family Member Death, Social Isolation, and Cardiometabolic Health: Racial Disadvantage in the U.S." Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Online. May 2021.

Donnelly, Rachel. “Precarious Work, Marital Quality, and Divorce: A Gendered Dyadic Analysis of Aging Couples.” Presented at the Gerontological Society of American annual meeting. Online. November 2020

Donnelly, Rachel. “Precarious Work in Midlife and Later-life Health and Mortality.” Presented at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association. Online. August 2020.

Donnelly, Rachel and Debra Umberson. “Family Member Death, Social Isolation, and Cardiometabolic Health: Racial Disadvantage in the U.S.” Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Washington, D.C., April 2020. (Conference canceled)

Donnelly, Rachel. “Family Member Loss and Health Trajectories among Black and White Older Adults.” Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Washington, D.C., April 2020. (Conference canceled)

Donnelly, Rachel. Debra Umberson, Robert A. Hummer, and Michael A. Garcia. “Death of a Child and Mortality Risk Over the Life Course: Racial Disadvantage in the U.S.” Presented at the Gerontological Society of America annual meeting. Austin, TX. November 2019.

Donnelly, Rachel. “Family Member Loss as a Cumulative Burden for Health among Black and White Older Adults.” Presented at the Gerontological Society of America annual meeting. Austin, TX. November 2019.

Donnelly, Rachel. “Precarious Employment and Pain in Midlife.” Presented at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association. New York, NY, August 2019.

Donnelly, Rachel. “How Precarious Employment in Midlife Shapes Health.” Presented at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association. Philadelphia, PA, August 2018.

Donnelly, Rachel. “Precarious Employment Contributes to Poor Health Among Midlife Workers in the U.S.” Presented at the International Conference on Social Stress Research. Athens, Greece, June 2018.

Donnelly, Rachel. “Poor Health Among Midlife Adults: The Role of Precarious Employment.” Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Denver, CO, April 2018.

Donnelly, Rachel, Brandon Robinson, and Debra Umberson. “Can Spouses Buffer the Impact of Discrimination on Depressive Symptoms? A Comparison of Same-sex and Different-sex Marriages.” Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Denver, CO, April 2018.

Behler, Rachel, **Rachel Donnelly**, and Debra Umberson. "Psychological Distress Contagion in Same-Sex and Different-Sex Marriages." Presented at the annual conference of the American Sociological Association. Montreal, Canada, August 2017.

Donnelly, Rachel, Debra Umberson, and Tetyana Pudrovska. "Race Differences in Family Death Exposures and Subjective Life Expectancy." Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Chicago, IL, April 2017.

Umberson, Debra, Corinne Reczek, Rhiannon Kroeger, **Rachel Donnelly**, and Brandon Robinson. "Stress and the Provision of Social Support in Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Marriages." Presented at the International Sociological Association. Vienna, Austria, July 2016.

Donnelly, Rachel and Debra Umberson. "Life Course Stressors and Marital Strain in Same-Sex and Different-Sex Marriages." Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Washington, D.C., April 2016

Donnelly, Rachel and Leticia Marteletto. "Intergenerational Transmission of Dietary Patterns within Families: A Gender Perspective." Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. Washington, D.C., March 2016

Donnelly, Rachel and Debra Umberson. "Childhood Adversity, Daily Stress, and Marital Strain in Same-Sex and Different-Sex Marriages." Presented at the Council on Contemporary Families Conference Flash Session. Austin, TX, March 2016.

Donnelly, Rachel. "Intergenerational Changes and Health: The Effect of Downward Educational Mobility." Presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Chicago, IL, August 2015.

Donnelly, Rachel. "Are the Health Returns to Education Changing? An Examination of Education and Self-Rated Health in 1972 and 2011." Presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America. San Diego, CA, April 2015.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate:

Structural Inequalities, Vanderbilt University (2024)

Undergraduate:

Health and Society, Vanderbilt University (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024, 2025, 2026)

Race, Gender, and Health, Vanderbilt University (2021, 2022, 2024)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2026-2028 Editorial Board Member, *Research on Aging*

2025-2028 Council Member, American Sociological Association, Section on Aging and the Life Course.

2025-2027	Editorial Board Member, <i>Society and Mental Health</i>
2025	Session Organizer, American Sociological Association, “Work and Mental Health”
2025	Session Discussant, Population Association of America, “Social/Family Ties and Cognitive Aging.”
2025	Referee, Ad Hoc Member, NIA Special Emphasis Review Panel
2024	Session Discussant, Population Association of America, “Families, Health, and Well-being”
2024	Session Organizer, Population Association of America, “Social Networks, Social Support, and Health”
2023-2024	Nominations Committee Chair, American Sociological Association, Mental Health Section
2023	Referee, Ad Hoc Member – Early Career Reviewer, NIH Social Sciences and Population Studies Study Section A (SSPA)
2023	Session Discussant, American Sociological Association, “Racism, Discrimination, and Impacts on Health and Wellbeing”
2022-2024	Editorial Board Member, <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>
2021-2023	Guest Editor for Special Issue, <i>Work and Occupations</i>
2020	Session Organizer, Population Association of America, “Sexual- and Gender-Minority Families”
2019	Session Discussant, American Sociological Association, “LGBTQ Health and Medical Issues”
2019	Session Presider, Population Association of America, “Race, Ethnicity, and the Demography of Mental Health”
2018	Session Discussant, Population Association of America, “Same-Sex Unions & Family Life”
2017	Session Presider, American Sociological Association, “Mortality and Morbidity”
2017	Session Presider, Population Association of America, “Sexual Identity, Health Behavior, and Well-being”

AD-HOC REVIEWER

<i>American Sociological Review</i>	<i>Social Science & Medicine</i>
<i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	<i>Society and Mental Health</i>
<i>Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences</i>	<i>Sociology of Race and Ethnicity</i>
<i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i>	<i>Work & Occupations</i>
<i>Journal of Social and Personal Relationships</i>	<i>Milbank Quarterly</i>
	<i>Demography</i>

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Sociological Association
 Sections: Aging and the Life Course; Medical Sociology; Mental Health; Population
 Population Association of America
 Gerontological Society of America
 Interdisciplinary Association for Public Health Science