We examined racial/ethnic (R/E) differences in health care utilization among older adults with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia (ADRD) from US Deep South [DS] and non-DSs, and individual or context-level factors that affect this utilization. Data were 2013-2015 claims for Medicare beneficiaries with ADRD; county-level data were used to define context-level covariates; adjusted analyses were conducted separately for DS and non-DS. Across R/E groups, 33%-43% in DS, 43%-50% in non-DS used ADRD specialists; 47%-55% in DS, 41%-48% in non-DS used ADRD drugs; 42.9%-53.4% in DS, 42%-51.8% in non-DS had hospitalizations in a one-year follow-up. R/E differences were not significant, with few exceptions. Comorbidities, poverty, and medical resources availability were associated with specialist use and hospitalizations; comorbidities and specialist use were associated with drug use. In non-DS only, other individual, context-level covariates were associated with health care outcomes. Research should further examine determinants of health care utilization in these populations.

THE CHALLENGE OF IDENTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLES IN RESEARCH INVOLVING MINORITY PARTICIPANTS
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Determining participants’ demographics, cognition, and functional performance by race is crucial to understanding disparities in clinical research on Alzheimer’s disease. We compared demographic and performance variables between Black/African American (B/AA; N=30; 41%) and White participants (N=43, 59%) in the UAB Alzheimer’s Disease Center. Among 73 participants, 38 (52%) were women, mean age was 65.7 (SD 9.47), and mean education was 16 (2.31) years. Significant differences in gender proportions across race groups were observed. B/AA women represented 70% of their race group, white women represented 39.5%. There were no statistically significant differences in age, education, cognitive or functional severity, reasons to participate in research, referral source, objective measures of cognition, or informant-rated daily function by race group. In conclusion, despite 50% oversampling of B/AA participants compared to the state population, no differences in cognitive and functional performance at the time of enrollment were associated with race.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS: RACIAL AND REGIONAL VARIATIONS
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To examine whether racial and regional social determinants of health disparities exist for older adults with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD). We identified 115,879 African American (AA) and White older adults with ADRD (10% from the Deep South) from administrative claims data for a 5% random sample of Medicare beneficiaries (2013-2015). We examined racial and regional differences across sociodemographic characteristics, county-level linked poverty indicators, medical resource availability categories, insurances quality indicators. Social context differences were found between regions including Deep South older adults with ADRD having higher economic impoverishment and lower access rates to specialty medical care services. Older Deep South AA had higher Medicare/Medicaid eligibility rates and less medical access. Significant socioeconomic disparities exist between Deep South and other US regions across several social determinant factors in older adults with ADRD. Social context differences were especially prominent for older Deep South AA with ADRD.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRIOR CANCER DIAGNOSIS AND ALL-CAUSE DEMENTIA PROGRESSION AMONG U.S. ADULTS
Mackenzie Fowler, Nicole Wright, Kristen Triebel, Gabrielle Rocque, Ryan Irvin, and Richard Kennedy, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama, United States

Cancer-related cognitive impairment is a common effect of cancer that shares symptoms with dementia. Only one study examined cancer’s longitudinal association with dementia. This analysis expands to a larger clinical sample. Electronic health record data were extracted from July 2003-February 2020. Baseline cognition/progression on the Alabama Brief Cognitive Screener (ABCs) by cancer history were assessed using linear mixed effects models, with interaction by race. After adjustment for demographics/socioeconomics, those with cancer history had higher baseline cognition (β: 1.49 [0.91-2.07]), and declined slower (β: 0.40 [0.08-0.71]) than those without. Health behaviors/comorbidities attenuated this association. Non-Hispanic Blacks with cancer history demonstrated lower cognition throughout follow-up compared to non-Hispanic Whites / other race/ethnicities with cancer history and participants without cancer history. Health behaviors/comorbidities confound and race modifies the relationship between cancer and dementia. Exploring the role of health behaviors/comorbidities on this association and causes of racial disparities is needed.

Session 1385 (Symposium)
EMERGING SCHOLARS AND JUNIOR FACULTY PRESENT NEW STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN GERONTOLOGY
Chair: Sarah Hahn Discussant: Jennifer Kinney

With the rapid aging of the population, the need for gerontological educators to identify pedagogical strategies to increase interest and prepare students continues to grow. Innovative approaches and educational practices contribute greatly to student success in the gerontological classroom. Literature on gerontological pedagogy has shed light on the success of high-impact practices, creative assignments,
pedagogical interventions, and even different course modalities when it comes to effectively delivering gerontological content and engaging students. Additionally, the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) provides a wealth of suggestions for creating and implementing effective gerontology courses and assignments. However, while we are familiar with these practices, we are not familiar with how specific groups of academics, such as emerging scholars and junior faculty, are utilizing them. Emerging scholars and junior faculty experience several major transitions as they prepare for life in academia. To ensure that emerging scholars and junior faculty are well prepared, we need to continue to empower these individuals to foster growth. This can be done by highlighting how emerging scholars and junior faculty have met the goals of maximizing and optimizing student learning. As such, the purpose of this symposium is to examine innovative approaches used by emerging scholars and junior academics in the gerontological classroom that have optimized student learning. This includes presentations on strategies for team-based learning, using intersectionality as a theoretical lens, and two creative written assignments, The Gerontological Movie Database Review and Interview an Elder.

INTERVIEWING AN ELDER: STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE IN AN INTRODUCTION TO GERONTOLOGY CLASSROOM
Sarah Hahn, Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, New York, United States

Within the gerontological classroom, high-impact practices and creative assignments have consistently shown to help engage students, optimize learning, and increase positive attitudes toward older adults and aging (e.g., Chonody, 2015; Yamashita, et al., 2018). One such creative assignment, interviewing an older adult, has been cited as both an influential and valuable experience to gerontology students (e.g., O’Hanlon & Brookover, 2002). Although this assignment has been popular in and out of gerontology courses, more data regarding this and student’s understanding is needed. As such, this presentation aims to 1) introduce and establish the value of using the written assignment, “Interview an Elder” in the gerontology classroom and 2) present preliminary qualitative data on how students’ perceptions of older adults changed after the assignment. Using thematic analysis, results suggest that students are not only surprised by what they learned, but have increased positive perceptions of older adults overall.

FLIPPING THE SCRIPT ABOUT AGING THROUGH FILMS: THE GERONTOLOGICAL MOVIE DATABASE REVIEW
Sara Hackett, University of South Florida , Wesley Chapel, Florida, United States

Education about the heterogeneity of the older adult population is an important step for reducing ageist attitudes. As many undergraduate students view gerontology as an unrelatable discipline, educators are tasked with identifying innovative strategies to make course content engaging. The purpose of this presentation is to share an emerging educator’s experience with creating a novel essay assignment. Based off the International Movie Database (IMDb), the Gerontological Movie Database (GMDb) Review encourages students to use their knowledge to evaluate how older adults are portrayed in films. Explicitly, students must 1) choose a film that focuses on older adult characters and 2) apply key gerontological concepts (e.g., the life course perspective) to critique the film’s representation of aging. Though movie reviews are not a typical genre of writing, this assignment increases students’ understanding of how their perception of aging, coupled with master narratives embedded within today’s culture, influences the construction of age.

USING TEAM-BASED LEARNING IN AN ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS GERONTOLOGY COURSE
Leah Janssen, Scripps Gerontology Center, Oxford, Ohio, United States

Team-based learning (TBL) was chosen for its learner-centered approach to intentional engagement and purposeful application of course material in a cross-listed, upper-level gerontology class (i.e., Social Forces in Aging). Intedashboard, an online TBL platform, was utilized to support the online synchronous course, which is especially useful for its integration of class material, module assessments, peer/course evaluations, and dashboard display of live team activity. From the perspective of an emerging scholar, this symposia session will explore the application of TBL as a tool for developing teams, helping students personally connect with course material, and support inclusive teaching initiatives. More specifically, this presentation examines how a scaffolded TBL exercise on cumulative advantage/disadvantage, intersectionality, and social identities led to increased identification and awareness of students’ social location, and the perceived impacts on their later lives.

USING INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY AS A LENS IN A PERSPECTIVES ON AGING CLASS
Kelly Munly, Penn State Altoona, Altoona, Pennsylvania, United States

The presenter will discuss strategies for using intersectionality as a theoretical lens in her Perspectives on Aging class in order to support students to understand the relevance of aging studies—including health and social disparities in aging—for their contemporary lived lives, as well as for prior generations. With this relevance established, the class also examines the significance and justifications for the development of policy, such as Social Security legislation, as well as the need for aging-related career areas. The presenter will discuss the application of key course resources, including research that looks at aging in historic contexts, as well as content highlighting the importance of Age Friendliness and the diversity of career areas to support Age Friendliness and more optimal aging experiences overall. Examining historic roots of aging-related experiences in social contexts creates an informative platform for understanding experiences of aging in society today.