TWU researcher to study impact of COVID misinformation on Hispanics

Although the numbers have narrowed, Hispanics in the United States were 1.7 times more likely to die from COVID than non-Hispanic people in age-adjusted data, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There are social, economic and demographic factors that may have played a role in producing that statistic.

As COVID-19 spread during the pandemic, so did inaccurate information about the virus and the vaccines. It’s unclear how social media messages affected people’s views toward COVID-19 and the vaccines. The fact is, little is known about the effect misleading information on COVID had on minority groups, particularly Hispanics. A professor at Texas Woman’s University is hoping to change that.

Rigoberto Delgado, PhD, an associate professor in health administration at TWU’s Houston campus, was awarded a $500,000 grant from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in May to measure the extent and effect of COVID-19 misinformation and disinformation among Hispanics and to provide data to design policies to combat misconceptions about the virus.

The CDC defines misinformation as false information shared by people who do not intend to mislead others, while disinformation is false information deliberately created and disseminated with malicious intent.

Delgado and his team will use advanced analytics methods to study social media data. The analysis will include social media messaging from El Paso and Juarez, Mexico.

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The next time an American sets foot on the moon, Texas Woman’s University will play a role in the journey. NASA has awarded TWU and the University of North Texas a three-year, $900,000 grant, part of a $14 million program with 19 colleges and universities “to participate in critical spaceflight research and prepare a new generation of diverse students for careers in the nation’s science, technology, engineering, and math workforce,” NASA explained.

The grant is the result of collaboration between Richard Zhang, PhD, from UNT’s Mechanical Engineering department, Jeffry Kelber, PhD, in UNT’s Chemistry department, and John Beatty, PhD, of TWU’s Chemistry and Biochemistry department.

“Richard contacted me earlier this year and asked if we wanted to be part of it,” Beatty said. “I said, yeah, we’ll help out wherever we can. And I think we submitted the proposal in April.”

The title of the TWU-UNT project is “Protective Thermal Electro-Chromic Coatings (ProTECC) for Lunar Exploration.” TWU will assist UNT in developing and analyzing coatings for vehicles and equipment to protect from dust, radiation, and the lethal temperature swings in space, which can range from more than 400 degrees Fahrenheit to −300 degrees.

“On Earth, we’re protected by our atmosphere,” Beatty said. “With the moon and in space, you have virtually no protection except the equipment that’s around you.”

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**RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT**

**Dr. Zane Lybrand**  
**Biology**  
Awarded a grant in the amount of $100,000 from the Institute for Rehabilitation and Research for his project titled “Developing stem cell derived cortical grafts for brain regeneration in TBI.”

**Dr. Laura Kubin and Dr. Niki Fogg**  
**Nursing – Dallas**  
**Nursing – Denton**  
Awarded funding in the amount of $29,589 on a grant from the National League for Nursing for their project titled “Creating Alternative Clinical Experiences with Unfolding Simulations Using AI.”

**Dr. Erika Armstrong, Ms. Catherine Lynch, and Dr. Chris Bolinger**  
**School of Health Sciences**  
**Communication Sciences and Oral Health**  
Awarded continuation funding in the amount of $143,211 on a subcontract from the Education Service Center Region X on a grant from Texas Education Agency for their project “TWU Speech/Language Pathology Distance Master’s Degree Program.”

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**2023–2024 Student Creative Arts & Research Symposium**

The 2023–2024 Student Creative Arts and Research Symposium will take place April 23rd – 24th, 2024. Submissions will open by November 2023. You can submit your Symposium abstract by following the link below. We look forward to another great year of presentations.

For more information about the Symposium [Click Here](#)

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**Funding Opportunities**

Submissions are now open for the Research Enhancement Program (REP) and for the Creative Arts and Humanities Grant Program (CAHGP). Applications are due Thursday October 26th, 2023.

You can find more information about internal funding [Here](#)