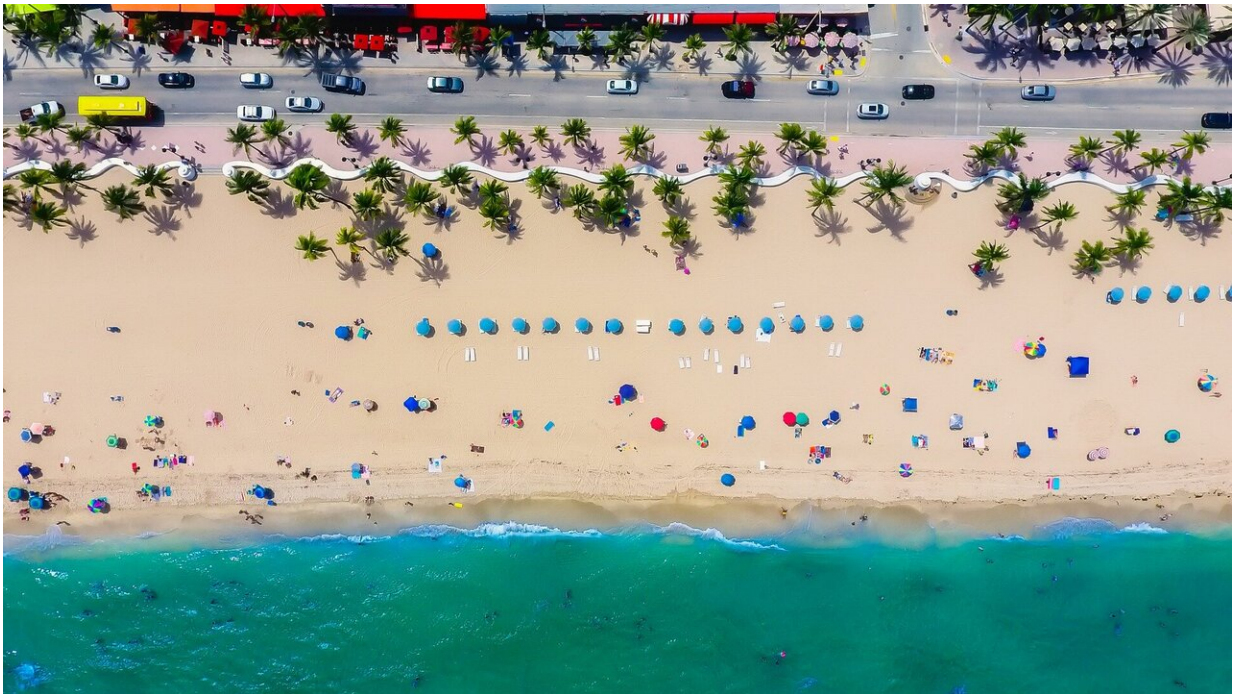


New project helps track coronavirus, health disparities in South Florida

April 23 2020, by David Drucker



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

IU has launched its COVID-19 and South Florida Health Disparities Project, a geographic dashboard that monitors how different groups of people in South Florida are being affected by the coronavirus. It includes COVID-19 cases and deaths in different parts of the region, as well as how cases break down by gender, race, age and ethnicity.

[Check out the live map.](#)

The project pulls data mainly from the John Hopkins University's Coronavirus Resource Center, which displays [coronavirus](#) information for the world, and from the Florida Department of Health. It updates every hour.

"John Hopkins has handled it beautifully. But they don't have it for South Florida and its health disparities, so that's what we did," says, Yesim Darici—director of the Center for Women's & Gender Studies, assistant provost of STEM and professor of physics—who developed the project in collaboration with University of Memphis professor Esra Ozdenerol, a GIS expert and former FIU faculty member.

The dashboard displays not only cases by race, age, sex and ethnicity, but also a map that indicates where populations are densest, where people lack health insurance and other measurables that can indicate health disparities. The map also shows locations of testing sights and information about local hospitals.

By making this information easily accessible to the public, Darici says, South Florida's decision-makers can have greater awareness of who needs help.

"We are hoping this map will help the people who are helping in our state to help these [vulnerable people](#)," Darici adds.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, Darici invites others to help her expand the map. She hopes to add more layers, such as where students are and where gender-based violence is occurring.

Coronavirus testing is not widespread enough yet in Florida for the project to display data on how many people truly have the virus and

where they are, Darici says; so she doesn't want to make any assumptions based off the map now. But as information becomes better known, she is interested to see what correlations there are between various health disparities, such as lacking health insurance or living alone as a senior, and having COVID-19.

"This is the first step of our work. We are going to continue, and it will be more informative and more helpful as the weeks go by," Darici says.

Provided by Florida International University

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