



Emory University School of Nursing Assistant Professor Awarded Grant for “The Brain Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse Adults: An Examination of Alzheimer’s disease and Related Dementias Risk and Psychosocial Stressors”

Atlanta, GA – November 17, 2023 - The National Institute of Aging (NIA) has awarded a K23 grant, "The Brain Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse Adults: An Examination of Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Risk and Psychosocial Stressors" to Ethan Cicero PhD, RN, Assistant Professor with Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing. This K23 Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award provides funding to determine the extent of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD) disparities and ADRD risk among transgender and gender diverse (TGD) adults, characterize TGD-specific experiences and psychosocial stressors expected to influence cognition, and explore associations between cognitive function, TGD psychosocial stressors, and ADRD risk and protective factors among a cohort of middle-aged and older TGD adults.

ADRD is a public health priority and is well-established as a health disparity for some racial and ethnically minoritized groups. TGD people (i.e., those with a gender identity that differs from their sex assigned at birth) are a marginalized group that share many of the same psychosocial stressors and adverse health conditions linked to ADRD risk among cisgender adults (non-TGD) from minoritized ethnoracial communities. Yet, little is known about the epidemiology of and risk factors for ADRD among TGD adults. Most existing ADRD research was not designed to identify TGD participants or assess how ADRD risk is affected by TGD-specific experiences and psychosocial stressors (e.g., TGD status disclosure, gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) use, anti-TGD discrimination). It is also unclear if ADRD prevalence and risk vary by TGD subgroups (e.g., transfeminine, transmasculine, nonbinary) or those using GAHT. The overarching goal of this K23 is to provide Dr. Cicero with the skills necessary to become an independent researcher and a leader in ADRD and cognitive aging among TGD adults.

Dr. Ethan Cicero is an Assistant Professor, tenure track, in the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Future of Nursing Scholar, and a Butler-Williams Scholar. Prior to joining Emory in August 2020, Dr. Cicero completed a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in the Biobehavioral Research Training in Symptom Science Program at the University of California, San Francisco, School of Nursing. He earned a PhD from the Duke University School of Nursing in 2018 and a BS in Nursing with Highest Honors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2014. Dr. Cicero’s research centers on the health and well-being of TGD adults, with a particular interest in methods used to promote healthy aging among these communities.

For more information on Dr. Ethan Cicero, visit his [faculty profile](#). To learn more about the K23 Research Project grant, visit the National Institute of Aging [website](#).

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About the School of Nursing

As one of the nation's top nursing schools, the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University is committed to educating visionary nurse leaders and scholars. Ranked the No. 1 master's, No. 2 BSN, and No. 6 DNP programs in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, the school is recognized

as a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education by the National League of Nursing. The school offers undergraduate, master's, doctoral and non-degree programs, bringing together cutting-edge resources, distinguished faculty, top clinical experiences, and access to leading health care partners to shape the future of nursing and impact the world's health and well-being. Learn more at nursing.emory.edu.