

ANDREW A. VERNON

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University of Texas at El Paso, College of Health Sciences

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Physician-scientist with an MD, MS in Applied Statistics, MPH, and doctoral candidacy (PhD, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences) offering broad expertise in infectious disease epidemiology, mixed-methods research design, quantitative data analysis, and geriatric workforce development. Demonstrated record of peer-reviewed publication, grant funding, international program leadership, dementia education, and capacity-building in HIV, HCV, and mental health. Committed to developing as an independent investigator and translating data-driven findings into improved patient care, with particular interest in pediatric and border-region infectious disease outcomes.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Interdisciplinary Health Sciences (Candidate) | *University of Texas at El Paso, College of Health Sciences* | El Paso, TX

In Progress | GPA: 3.6

- Dodson Research Grant recipient (Fall 2025) — competitive award supporting dissertation-level research (\$3,000; Jan–Jul 2026)
- Dissertation: Composite Health Stress Index (CHSI) — a validated, scalable instrument integrating environmental and mental health variables for border and low-resource settings

Master of Science in Mathematics — Big Data & Applied Statistics | *University of Texas at El Paso* | El Paso, TX

May 2021 | GPA: 3.8

Doctor of Public Health, Health Promotion & Behavioral Science (Coursework Completed)

| *University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, El Paso Regional Campus* | El Paso, TX *Coursework Completed*

Master of Public Health — Community Health | *New Mexico State University* | Las Cruces, NM

May 2012 | GPA: 3.88

- Thesis: The Social and Individual Issues Influencing Teens to Engage in Underage Drinking

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology — Medical Sociology | *New Mexico State University* | Las Cruces, NM

December 2008 | GPA: 3.65

- Recipient, International Scholarship; Dean's List; Crimson Scholar

Doctor of Medicine (MD) — General Medicine | *Central America Health Sciences University*

| Belize City, Belize

October 2007 | GPA: 3.6

- World Health Organization Certified; Recipient of University Scholarship

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Associate — Health Sciences | *University of Texas at El Paso* | El Paso, TX

June 2024 – Present

- Design and implement interdisciplinary research on climate change, environmental exposures, and infectious/mental health outcomes.

- Develop and validate the Composite Health Stress Index (CHSI), integrating environmental and mental health variables for border communities.
- Execute quantitative and qualitative analyses using Power BI, R, and NVivo; produce data visualizations and manuscripts for federally funded projects.
- Contribute to peer-reviewed manuscript preparation; serve as peer reviewer for *Frontiers in Public Health*.

Research Associate — GWEP (Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program) | University of Texas at El Paso, HRSA Grant #U1Q53051 | El Paso, TX
2024 – Present

- Conduct program evaluation and pre/post data analysis for Dementia Live® experiential learning initiatives reaching 1,150+ healthcare and social service professionals.
- Co-author scholarly work with Dr. Emre Umucu and Dr. Guillermina Solis on disability, aging, and dementia care in border communities.
- Lead iPoster development and oral conference presentations representing UTEP GWEP at regional and national conferences.

Research Associate — Program Evaluation | University of Texas at El Paso, College of Education | El Paso, TX
June 2023 – February 2024

- Designed and implemented program evaluation instruments; conducted mixed-methods analysis and monitoring of educational program indicators.

Program & Data Analyst — HIV/HCV Prevention | Centro San Vicente Health Clinic | El Paso, TX
May 2018 – October 2020

- Developed evaluation instruments for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) programs; conducted statistical analysis of HCV and HIV clinical datasets.
- Produced scientific materials for national HIV/HCV conferences; collaborated with clinical teams to inform care protocols.

Project Coordinator — Child Health & Nutrition | World Bank (Japanese Social Development Fund Grant) | Belize
October 2013 – October 2016

- Oversaw implementation and evaluation of national child health programs; managed \$3M grant portfolio including stakeholder analysis, financial monitoring, and project reporting.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP & MENTORSHIP

Program Coordinator — Mental Health & Psychosocial Initiative | Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) | Washington, DC / Caribbean Region
April 2021 – December 2022

- Led regional policy and program planning for Caribbean mental health systems serving multiple countries.
- Designed, delivered, and evaluated virtual capacity-building courses with 600+ participants and 200 certified completers.
- Conducted program evaluations and data analysis to inform PAHO technical cooperation strategies.

Health Educator Specialist | New Mexico Department of Health | New Mexico
August 2012 – July 2013

- Provided HIV/STD counseling, harm reduction education, and community health outreach; ensured regulatory compliance with applicable state and federal protocols.

Technical Advisor | Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations | Belize
November 2018

- Reviewed and provided expert recommendations for the National School Feeding Program plan in Belize.

Technical Advisor | Government of Belize, Ministry of Health | Belize

January 2016 – October 2016

- Developed action plans for the EU 11th Development Fund (SMART Hospitals) and Banana Accompanying Measures 2015 projects.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

1. Umucu, E., Vernon, A. A., Pan, D., Qin, S., Solis, G., & Lee, B. (2025). Health inequities among persons with disabilities: A global scoping review. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1538519>
2. Umucu, E., Vernon, A. A., & colleagues. (2024). Posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms and well-being in veterans with and without disabilities: A moderated mediation model linking core self-evaluations and gender. *Frontiers in Psychology*.
3. Pan American Health Organization. (2021). Technical meeting on the public health aspects of dementia in the Americas. Washington, DC: PAHO. <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/56565>
4. Pan American Health Organization. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on mental, neurological, and substance use services in the Americas. Washington, DC: PAHO. <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/54784>
5. Cayetano, C., Vernon, A. A., et al. (2021). An initiative to improve mental health practice in primary care in Caribbean countries. *Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10289476/>

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

- Vernon, A. A., & colleagues. (In preparation). Mental health policy, cultural responsiveness, and health equity in Hispanic border communities: An integrative review. Target journal: *Frontiers in Public Health*.
- Vernon, A. A., Solis, G., & Umucu, E. (In preparation). GWEP pre/post-test manuscript: Dementia Live® outcomes in a US-Mexico border workforce. UTEP GWEP, HRSA Grant #U1Q53051.

PEER REVIEW SERVICE

Peer Reviewer, Frontiers in Public Health

- Wemrell et al. (2025). Trust in healthcare and perceived discrimination in Sweden. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1557921>
- Living during COVID-19: Qualitative analysis of socioeconomic inequalities (2025).
- Auroprem et al. (2025). Catastrophic health expenditure among households with differently abled children in India.
- Ji, Chu, & Qin (2025). Redistributive effects of China's urban-rural basic medical insurance.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS & POSTERS

6. Vernon, A. A., & Solis, G. (2026). Building the Geriatrics Workforce Across Settings: GWEP Innovations in Dementia Care and Long-Term Care Education — Experiential Learning to Strengthen Dementia Care Partnerships. Oral presentation, 47th Annual Southern Gerontological Society (SGS) Meeting & Conference, Dallas, TX. UTEP GWEP, HRSA Grant #U1Q53051.
7. Vernon, A. A., Solis, G., & Umucu, E. (2026). Building Dementia-Capable Communities: Student-Led Impact on Alzheimer's and Dementia Care at the El Paso Border. iPoster presentation, UTEP COURI/EDGE Symposium 2026. University of Texas at El Paso Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, HRSA Grant #U1Q53051.
8. Vernon, A. A., & Solis, G. (2026). Systems Integration for Dementia-Capable Workforces: A Human Factors Model in a Border Region — Inclusive Design for Dementia-Capable Protective Services in a U.S.–Mexico Border Community. Poster presentation, El Paso Regional Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES) Conference, El Paso, TX.

9. Umucu, E., Greaux, M., Kamenov, K., Vernon, A., & Lee, B. (2025, November). Advancing Disability-Inclusive Digital Health and AI: A Global Scoping Review. Poster, American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.
10. Vernon, A. A. (2024, November). The relationship between mental health and employment among veterans with disabilities during COVID-19. APHA Annual Meeting & Expo.
11. Vernon, A. A. (2018). Barriers to effective and appropriate HCV treatment for homeless persons with mental health concerns within the US-Mexico border region. National Biomedical Liver Conference.
12. Barriers to Health Communication. Poster, New Mexico Alliance for Minority Participation, Fall 2011.
13. Health Illiteracy in the Hispanic Community. Poster, 14th Annual SOPHE Health Education Advocacy Summit, Spring 2011.
14. Vernon, A. A. (2010). Effects of Alcohol & Drug Interventions on Teenaged High School Students. AAHE Health Education Summit, Cancun, Mexico.

GRANTS & FUNDING

- Dodson Research Grant — University of Texas at El Paso Graduate School (\$3,000; 2025–2026; PI)
- HRSA Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) Grant #U1Q53051 — UTEP (Research Associate/Presenter)
- Rotary Global Fund — Water Rehabilitation in Toledo District, Belize (\$68,000; Grant Writer/Coordinator)
- Japanese Social Development Fund — Health & Nutrition Improvement in Toledo, Belize (\$3,000,000; Grant Writer/Coordinator)
- Project Graduation — Teenage DWI Intervention, Dona Ana County, NM (\$50,000; PI)
- Project Waste Disposal — Hospital Sanitation Pilot, Las Cruces, NM (\$40,000; Co-Investigator)
- Peer Champions — Behavioral Change Pilot among Hispanic Adolescents (Co-Investigator)
- Project ETS — Environmental Tobacco Smoke and Skin Cancer (Grant Writer/Co-Investigator)

TECHNICAL SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

- Statistical Software: R, SPSS, Power BI, NVivo — quantitative and qualitative analysis, GIS integration
- Research Methods: Mixed-methods design, program evaluation, epidemiological analysis, statistical modeling, pre/post evaluation design
- Clinical: Clinical Trials Fundamentals (Medical Center of the Americas Foundation, 2023); HIV/STD counseling and harm reduction; HIV/HCV program data analysis
- Regulatory & Compliance: HIPAA, FEMA Incident Command Systems, World Bank Fiduciary Training
- Languages: English (fluent); Spanish (professional proficiency — reading, writing, speaking)
- Communication: Peer-reviewed publications, grant writing, oral & poster conference presentations (national and regional), technical reports for PAHO and WHO-certified programs

CERTIFICATIONS & TRAINING

- Alzheimer's Association Dementia Training & Certification — El Paso, TX (2025)
- Clinical Trials Fundamentals — Medical Center of the Americas Foundation (2023)
- World Bank Fiduciary Training — Trinidad
- CDC and NMDOH Certifications: HIV/STD Counseling, Harm Reduction, HIPAA Compliance, FEMA Incident Command Systems

HONORS & PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Eta Sigma Gamma Health Education Honor Society (2011)
- Golden Key International Honor Society (2010)
- Alpha Kappa Delta Sociology Honor Society (2008)