

CURRICULUM VITAE

Lu Tian

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Last Updated October 2025

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Medical Sociology 2019 - 2024

University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), United States

GPA 4.0

Dissertation: “Investigating Impacts of Caregiving on Cognitive Function: The Role of Social Support.”

Committee: Drs. Patricia Drentea, Deborah Ejem, Greg Pavela, JD Wolfe, and Scott Westenberger

M.A in Medical Sociology 2019 - 2023

University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), United States

Thesis: “Family Members' Education and Cognitive Functioning among Older Adults: Investigating the Mediating Role of Health Behaviors”

Committee: Drs. JD Wolfe, Patricia Drentea, Greg Pavela

B.S. in Biotechnology 2006 -2010

Huaiyin Normal University, China

AWARDS

William Cockerham Award for the Best Graduate Student Paper in Medical Sociology 2023
“Family Members' Education and Cognitive Functioning among Older Adults: Investigating the Mediating Role of Health Behaviors”

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Health Behaviors, Biomarkers, Causal Inference Methods, Social Determinants of Health Disparities

PUBLICATIONS

Published

Patricia Drentea, Greg Pavela, **Lu Tian**, and Julie Locher. “Grandparenting and Physical Activity.” *Journal of Aging and Health* DOI: [10.1177/08982643241273197](https://doi.org/10.1177/08982643241273197)

MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS

Under review

Lu Tian, Patricia Drentea, “Family Members' Education and Cognitive Functioning Among Older Adults” *Journal of Population Ageing* (accepted, 2025)

Lu Tian, Patricia Drentea, A Biological Embodiment of Caregiving: A Longitudinal Study of Transitions and Gender Differences in Epigenetic Aging 2025 (under review with *Advances in Life Course Research*)

Lu Tian, Patricia Drentea, The Role of Social Ties in the Cognitive Function of Informal Caregivers: Findings from a Population-Based Propensity-Matched Analysis 2025 (under review with *Journal of Aging and Research*)

In Progress

Lu Tian, Patricia Drentea, Fei Wu “Association between Informal Caregiving and Biological Aging of older adults--A Machine Learning-based Approach to Biological Age Estimation”

Lu Tian, “A review of Family Caregiving and Biological Aging.”

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Independent researcher 2025

Independent Study

Supervisor: Greg Pavela, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, 2019
Task: Trained for Health Retirement Study and statistics under the instruction by Dr. Greg Pavela

Research Assistant 2022-2023

Project PIs: Stanton L. Gerson, Case Western Reserve University
David Warner, The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Task: Data analysis, comprehensive literature search
Project Professor: Magdalena Szaflarski, The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Task: Data analysis, survey design, comprehensive literature search
Project Professor: Keith Verna, The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Task: Comprehensive literature search

Licenses & certifications

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|--|--------------------------------|
| Advanced Learning Algorithms | (GZAZUKDFRYIMDeepLearning.AI) |
| Supervised Machine Learning | (QOQ9XRVB25KY DeepLearning.AI) |
| Python Programming Fundamentals | (B3TCIG6i5AGt Duke University) |
| Introduction to Graph Theory | (PT8BV5SJEXBQ UC San Diego) |
| Social Network Analysis | (5ERMACYTTNDM UC Davis) |
| Generative AI with Large Language Models | (95BVAKD9799U DeepLearning.AI) |
| Databases and SQL for Data Science with Python | (HA7WG5EZSCBL IBM) |
| Bayesian Statistics (with Honors) | (Z9CFIDKUQ78Y UC Santa Cruz) |
| Introduction to Generative AI | (JVETN97C4HAW Google Cloud) |

Intro to Generative AI Learning Path Specialization (HB9WKZAMDCE4C Google Cloud)
Responsible AI: Applying AI Principles with Google Cloud (X55L92RV42I5 Google Cloud)

PRESENTATIONS

Lu Tian, Patricia Drentea. 2025 The Role of Social Ties in the Cognitive Function of Informal Caregivers: Findings from a Population-Based Propensity-Matched Analysis (Pacific Sociological Association). San Francisco, CA, March

Lu Tian, JD Wolfe, Patricia Drentea, Greg Pavela. 2023 Family Members' Education and Cognitive Functioning among Older Adults: Investigating the Mediating Role of Health Behaviors”, University of Alabama at Birmingham, AL, September

Lu Tian, Patricia Drentea, Greg Pavela, Julie Locher. 2022 Grandparenting and Physical Activity. Southern Sociological Society. Birmingham, AL, April

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Reviewing a manuscript for *Journal of Aging and Health* (2025)

Reviewed a manuscript for *Journal of Gerontology Social Science* (2025)

Co-reviewed a manuscript for *Journal of Gerontology Social Science* (2025) in collaboration with Dr. Patricia Drentea, focusing on methodology and data analysis

SCHOLARLY MEMBERSHIPS

Pacific Sociological Association
American Sociological Association
Southern Sociological Society

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Independent Instructor

Contemporary Social Problems (245) (Online) 2024

Sociological Literacy (310) (Online) 2021

Lab Instructor

Research Experience Lab (489) (Blended) 2021

Social Statistics (601) (Face-to-Face) 2022

Categorical Data Analysis (704) (Online) 2023

Statistical Programming (707) (Online) 2023

Teaching Assistant, 2019-2023

SOC 100 Intro to Sociology (Online & Face-to-Face)

SOC 220 Sociology of Sex and Gender (Online)

SOC 250 Race and Ethnicity (Face-to-Face)

SOC 285 Introduction to Aging (Online)
SOC 310 Sociological Literacy (Face-to-Face)
SOC 407 Dev of Sociological Theory 407 (Online)
SOC 623 Applied Sociological Theory (Online)
SOC 626 Applied Sociology (Online)
SOC 627 Applied Social Psychology (Online)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Beijing Medical Development (Suzhou) Co., Ltd. (Acquired by Tigermed) (Remote)
Clinical Research Assistant Aug 2016- Aug 2018

Beijing Medical Development (Suzhou) Co., Ltd. (Suzhou, China)
Clinical Research Associate Sep 2010 - May 2016

Job description:

Administratively and clinically manage clinical trials. Ensure scientific integrity of data and protect the rights, safety, and well-being of patients enrolled in clinical trials. Ensure patient's referring physician receives notification of patient's participation as requested by the patient.

REFERENCES

Dr. Patricia Drentea (Dissertation Chair)

Professor

Address: Heritage Hall 460R, 1401 University Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35233

Email: pdrentea@uab.edu

Phone: (205) 934-2562

Dr. Joseph D. Wolfe (Dissertation Committee Member)

Associate Professor

Address: Heritage Hall 460A, 1401 University Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35233

Email: jdwolfe@uab.edu

Phone: (205) 934-8681

Dr. Scott Westenberger (Dissertation Committee Member)

Teaching Assistant Professor

Address: Heritage Hall 460D, 1401 University Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35233

Email: scwesten@uab.edu

Phone: (205) 975-0379

Dr. Gregory Pavela (Dissertation Committee Member)

Associate Professor

Associate Dean, Academic Affairs

Assistant Director, Survey Research Unit

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Email: pavela@uab.edu

Phone: (205) 934-6032