

Mapping Inequalities: A Geospatial Study of Opioid Treatment Disparities in Florida

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This study investigates the accessibility of treatment facilities for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) within Florida with particular emphasis on the traditional vulnerable communities or groups. The research uses several geospatial methods to examine how the number and location of OUD facilities distributed across space correlated with population characteristics in Florida. Within the framework of our method, we assess the extent to which OUD facility accessibility varies from one county or census block to another by considering block group population and actual travel time. The analysis seeks to pinpoint places, especially in rural areas, with insufficient OUD facilities to clarify any geographical disparities in healthcare accessibility. These county-level population-weighted travel costs, designed to provide an overall view of the provider community, will form the basis for informing attempts to improve alternative OUD care options. The findings of this study highlighted areas requiring enhancement in accessibility besides giving direction on policy debates in progress for implementation based on evidence. In addition, this study analyzes the accessibility of three major cities in the state (Tampa, Orlando, and Miami) and stratifications by various age groups, races, and income levels. The research utilizes the cumulative opportunity measure at multiple threshold times, revealing the number of facilities available for each county and providing a holistic overview of accessibility across Florida. In conclusion, the findings from this research can support the development of region-specific interventions aimed at treating opioid use disorders in Florida.

Keywords: Opioid Use Disorder, Accessibility, Geospatial, Vulnerable Populations, Healthcare

Primary author: HOSSAIN, Rajib (Florida State University)

Co-authors: Dr HORNER, Mark W. (Florida State University); Ms SMITH-COLLIER, Savannah (Florida State University); Ms CALLISON, KC (Florida State University)

Presenter: HOSSAIN, Rajib (Florida State University)

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