

Undergraduate Research with Dr. Clare Daniel Using Covidence

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Continuing as an undergraduate research assistant for Dr. Clare Daniel, I expanded on my knowledge and technical skills in pursuit of delving into critical questions at the intersection of reproductive health, ethics, and public policy. Working under Dr. Martha Silva and Dr. Clare Daniel, I've been part of a project that examines the ethical and methodological challenges researchers face when studying self-managed abortion (SMA) in countries where abortion is heavily restricted or banned.

One of my primary tasks this semester involved learning the ins and outs of a software called Covidence to screen over 7,300 articles from various academic databases, including PubMed and Embase. The screening process required determining the fitness of an article in terms of its relevance to the research question and the legality of abortions in a specific country. Strict inclusion criteria were outlined to ensure that articles were deciphered to the same standard. The inclusion criteria stated that the paper must be related in part or in whole to self-managed abortions and that the research was conducted in or commented on a country and time period where abortion was fully or partially restricted. I created an Excel spreadsheet over the summer that outlined the various legal stances of countries worldwide between 2004 and 2024, which is the time period of our dataset. This documentation of the legal framework for each country was the foundation for determining our inclusion criteria, as we focused on research from countries where abortion is classified as Banned* or Banned, the asterisk referring to exceptions in extenuating circumstances.

Collaborating with my mentors, I reviewed and refined the articles based on the inclusion criteria for the next full-text review phase. I grappled with nuanced legal interpretations and country-specific policies that impacted the articles pulled into the Covidence software. This process highlighted the complexities of studying SMA across diverse legal landscapes, especially when considering ethical implications for researchers and participants.

Over the semester, weekly meetings with Dr. Silva, Dr. Daniel, and Grace Hoegler, a graduate research assistant under Dr. Daniel, invoked fascinating and often puzzling conversations about the themes of our project. We discussed, at length, the nuances of defining “self-managed abortion,” the relevance of studies from countries with more liberal abortion laws, and the role of post-abortion care in self-managed abortion research.

I have had the pleasure of working with Dr. Daniel as a mentor and professor for the entirety of my undergraduate years at Tulane. Not only does Dr. Daniel enable me to conduct research that connects to my future career aspirations as a neonatologist working with high-risk pregnancies, but she also serves as someone I look up to for her commitment and involvement in the New Orleans community. Dr. Clare Daniel is a Senior Professor of Practice and Director of Research at Newcomb Institute. In addition to her work within the Tulane community, Dr. Daniel is a published author of her book titled *Mediating Morality: The Politics of Teen Pregnancy* in the Post-

Welfare Era with the University of Massachusetts Press. Her publications are in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *Present Tense: A Journal of Rhetoric and Society*, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, *Feminist Media Studies*, and others.

I want to offer a warm thank you to Dr. Clare Daniel, Dr. Martha Silva, Grace Hoegler, and Laura Wright in the Rudolph Matas Library of Health Sciences for all their help and support this semester. This experience has sharpened my research methodology and ethical analysis skills while deepening my understanding of global reproductive health issues.