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Dr. Maria Mercedes Rossi is a post-doctoral fellow at the food, nutrition and packaging sciences department. She leads and assists staff oversight of Dr. Parisi's EXCITE and VA grants as a researcher. Dr. Rossi is the project manager of the research entitled: "Understanding vaccine hesitancy of Hispanic adults living in rural areas of South Carolina." Dr. Rossi presented their work at the 2022 National Conference for Immunization Coalitions and Partnerships, and presented a poster—Equity in Health Care and Promotion Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic—at the 2022 Commission on Latino Affairs Symposium. Dr. Rossi also leads a research project entitled "Understanding the health and mental health needs of veterans and their spouses living in rural areas of South Carolina." Dr. Rossi holds a doctorate in plant and environmental sciences and a master's degree in food, nutrition and culinary sciences from Clemson University.