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Upcoming Conferences

May 10 - May 12, 2007
NOVA's 27th Annual Meeting
Washington, DC

May 22—May 24, 2007
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) Spring Congress
Orlando, FL

June 3—June 5, 2007
AcademyHealth's Annual Research Meeting
Orlando, FL

October 3—October 7, 2007
ACRM-ASNR Joint Educational Conference—Rehabilitation Research Without Borders,
Washington, DC

October 7—October 10, 2007
American Neurological Association 131st Annual Meeting
Washington DC

October 9—October 12, 2007
International Conference on Communication in Healthcare (ICCH)
Charleston, SC

RORC HOSTS NATIONAL HSR&D MEETING

After nearly a year in planning, the 2007 HSR&D National Meeting was held February 21-23 at the Hyatt Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia. This year's conference was the second largest on record. The RORC, as the host Center of Excellence for the conference, welcomed 552 VA researchers, clinicians and policy makers from around the country to participate in a scientific agenda on managing health and recovery through the continuum of care.



RORC Acting Director, Dr. Rebecca Beyth (L), and VHA Chief Research and Development Officer, Dr. Joel Kupersmith (R), at the opening plenary session.

The HSR&D National Meeting kicked off with a plenary session panel discussion focused on changing the environment of care for the returning Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) troops. The panel members raised issues, from a variety of viewpoints, that are of import to the newest generation of veterans. The panel included representatives from Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, Office of Seamless Transition, Office of Patient Care Services (Rehabilitation Service) and Captain Jonathan Pruden (retired), a new generation veteran who was seriously wounded in Iraq in 2003. Dr. Nina Sayer, Research Coordinator for the Polytrauma and Blast Related Injury QUERI moderated the session.

Following the panel discussion, the keynote speaker, Dr. Stephanie Studenski, focused her presentation on veterans at the other end of the age spectrum, the aging veteran, and the importance of integrated care for older adults across the health care continuum.

VA's Acting Under Secretary for Health, Brigadier General, US Army (retired), Dr. Michael Kussman, spoke at the luncheon session about the need for vigilance in securing veteran patient data and adhering to all data security protocols involving Protected Health Information. He also spoke to the challenges with the complex care needs of returning OEF/OIF veterans.



The RORC display booth introduced attendees to the Center's goals and mission.

The rest of the afternoon and through 1:30 pm the next day, conference attendees attended oral paper sessions, workshops, and poster presentations on health care issues spanning all ages of veterans and health conditions in VHA's patient population.

We're on the Web!
www.va.gov/rorc

Keep VA Information Safe — Follow Data Security Rules

INFORMATIONAL NEEDS OF OEF/OIF PUERTO RICAN VETERANS

OBJECTIVE: The overall aim of this study is to adapt existing education materials to help Puerto Rican (PR) Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans and their families readjust to life after returning home. This project is the critical, first step in accomplishing our long-range goal to improve the quality of life of PR OEF/OIF veterans/families through education interventions. This project builds on the ongoing program of research being conducted in partnership between the Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D)/Rehabilitation Research & Development (RR&D) Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center (RORC), the San Juan VA Medical Center (SJVAMC) within the Caribbean Healthcare System, and the VA Polytrauma Blast-Related QUERI Center.



Connie Uphold, PhD, RN
RORC Investigator

About Connie....

She has a PhD in Nursing from the University of Maryland and is a Research Health Scientist with the RORC. Dr. Uphold's research program focuses on the effects of aging and biopsychosocial factors, such as healthy lifestyles and stress, on outcomes in chronic illness. Dr. Uphold is also a Research Associate Professor in the University of Florida College of Nursing and a Courtesy Professor in the Department of Health Services Research, Management, and Policy in the College of Public Health and Health Professions. She is the Associate Director of Education at the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing, a distinguished lecturer in the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, and a member of the VA National Research Advisory Group.

RESEARCH PLAN: The aims of this project are the following: Aim 1: Review and analyze currently available or existing education materials on post-deployment readjustment for ease of use, acceptability, readability, accuracy, attractiveness, cultural relevance, and potential for comprehension by PR OEF/OIF veterans and family members. Aim 2: Adapt educational materials to pre-identified needs of OEF/OIF veterans and families based on findings from a currently funded project and our analysis of available materials in Aim 1. Aim 3: Pilot test and modify adapted education materials, and determine the most effective methods to disseminate education materials and methods to help PR veterans and families access education materials.

METHODS: We will use established methods and authoritative guidelines to analyze and adapt existing educational materials. Our project coordinator will organize into topics our collection of education materials related to readjustment following OEF/OIF from websites (e.g., Military OneSource), mailing catalogues, and already published VA brochures and outreach materials. The education specialist will teach our team the established methods for evaluating education materials. The team will assess the materials for ease of use, acceptability, readability, accuracy, attractiveness, cultural relevance, and potential for comprehension by PR OEF/OIF veterans. For Aim 2 we will adapt the existing education materials based on our work and reviews in Aim 1 of the existing materials. We will add information learned about our target audience from our ongoing funded qualitative study on OEF/OIF readjustment processes and education needs. Pilot testing of the adapted materials will be accomplished by conducting two focus groups' panel of PR healthcare providers and panel of PR OEF/OIF veterans. We will ask both groups to complete pre-group individual self administered surveys and express their views on the attractiveness, accuracy, usefulness, and culturally sensitivity of the adapted materials. We will ask both groups to discuss facilitators and barriers to change, and how best to access and disseminate education materials. In addition, we will individually assess each veteran's ability to read and comprehend the materials using established methods. Data will be transcribed, coded, and analyzed with traditional qualitative methods. Our adapted materials will be modified if needed after analyzing the data.

PRODUCT: The final product will be culturally relevant education materials and recommendations for accessing and disseminating materials that can be further tested and modified and subsequently used in future education interventions with PR OEF/OIF veterans.

This project is supported by HSR&D Service as project RRP 06-185.

VETERAN-CENTERED OUTCOMES USING QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE METHODS



*Craig Velozo, PhD
RORC Investigator*

OBJECTIVE: The long term objective of this study is to modify and develop measures that reflect outcomes that are relevant to recovering veterans and are sensitive to improvements resulting from innovative gait interventions. Existing clinically-generated measures, in general, have been developed independent of input from veterans. The purpose of this collaborative grant is to take advantage of qualitative and quantitative expertise from the Gainesville, Florida, Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center, with state-of-the art gait intervention research being conducted at the Gainesville Brain Rehabilitation Research Center, and the Cleveland Functional Electrical Stimulation Center. The specific objectives of the project are to: 1) Define/describe experiences of veterans during manually assisted locomotor training (MLT), robotic assisted locomotor training (RLT) and functional electrical stimulation assisted gait training (FES-GT); 2) Generate new items that will improve existing outcome measures and identify new Veteran-centered outcomes; and 3) Develop item banks for new veteran-centered outcomes using an IRT measurement framework.

METHODS: Data will be systematically collected using ethnographic field observations and in depth, semi-structured interviews. This multi-method approach will reveal the patients' perspectives of treatment outcomes via a dynamic, person-centered process that captures patients' treatment experiences, and the impact of treatments on patients' ability to participate in their home/community environments. Each of the 20 participants will be interviewed and observed three times: once at the beginning, mid-point and end of treatment (total of 60 observations). The second phase will involve using the identified constructs to develop item banks for veteran-centered outcome measures. Transcripts of interviews and field notes, coded by research investigators, will be used to identify consistent themes and patterns that define and describe participant/patient experiences of activities performed in treatment, home and community settings. Researchers from the collaborative centers will identify themes that are consistent with existing instruments (e.g., gait and balance) and three to five new themes that will be used to create new outcome measures. The IRT, Rasch measurement model will serve as the framework to enhance existing measures and to build new measures. The qualitative themes expressed by participants will be elaborated into measurement variables reflecting a hierarchical continuum of difficulty, e.g., unstable walking on a flat surface, unstable climbing up steps, unstable when attempting to jog. Dr. Velozo and colleagues have shown that the above process results in measures that match patient ability well (i.e., avoids ceiling and floor effects) and are effective in separating patients into statistically significant ability levels.

IMPACT: The major goal of the proposed project is to combine qualitative research methods and Item Response Theory (IRT) to enhance existing measures and develop new outcome measures for veterans receiving innovative forms of gait rehabilitation. Qualitative methodologies will uncover the physical, functional and psychosocial changes that are meaningful to veterans receiving gait rehabilitation. IRT measurement models will provide a framework to convert the qualitative findings into outcomes measures that reflect meaningful changes that veterans experience through the recovery process. In the long-term, these improved and newly-developed measures should be more sensitive in monitoring the effects of innovative gait interventions while directly examining outcomes that are meaningful to recovering veterans.

About Craig...

He received his PhD in Experimental Psychology from Ohio University and is nationally and internationally known for research on outcome measures using Rasch measurement theory. Dr. Velozo is an Associate Professor and Associate Chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy at UF PHHP and an Occupational Therapist. His research focus is on developing computer adaptive physical and cognitive functional measures and crosswalking health-care measures. He is a Research Health Scientist with the RORC, Content Manager for RR&D, serves as the Lead of Outcomes Measurement thematic area (Theme Area 2) and Lead of the predoctoral fellowship program within the career development and training core.

This project is supported by RR&D Service as project 040521.

RORC MISSION

To improve the health, function, and well being of veterans with central nervous system (CNS) damage and traumatic injuries by conducting interdisciplinary research in rehabilitation outcomes and health services research.

RORC GOALS

- (1) Evaluate the structure, process, quality, access, and cost of rehabilitation services across the VHA;
- (2) Develop new and more precise measures across the continuum of care using state of the science methodologies;
- (3) Evaluate innovative systems and processes of care through the continuum of care; and
- (4) Recruit, train, and retain highly qualified and productive health services and rehabilitation outcomes researchers and build capacity for rehabilitation outcomes research.

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RECENT RORC PUBLICATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Hannold EM, Young ME, **Rittman MR**, Bowden MG, Behrman AL. Locomotor Training: Experiencing the Changing Body. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*. November/December 2006;43(7):905-916.

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Braun UK, **Beyth RJ**, Ford ME, McCullough LB. Defining Limits in Care of Terminally Ill Patients. *BMJ* 2007;334:239-241.

Jia H, Zheng Y, Reker DM, **Cower DC**, **Wu SS**, **Vogel WB**, **Young GC**, Duncan PW. Multiple System Utilization and Mortality for Veterans With Stroke. *Stroke*. 2007;38:355-360.

Bono C, **Ried LD**, Kimberlin C, **Vogel WB**. Missing data on the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale: A comparison of 4 imputation techniques. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*. 2007; 3(1): 1-27.

Wolinsky FD, Miller DK, **Andresen EM**, Malmstrom TK, Miller JP, Miller TR. Effect of subclinical status in functional limitation and disability on adverse health outcomes 3 years later. *The Journals of Gerontology Series A, Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*. 2007; 62(1): 101-6.

Chumbler NR, Kobb R, Harris L, Richardson L, **Sberna M**, Dixit N, Ryan P, Darkins A, Donaldson M, Kreps G. The Impact of a Cancer Care Coordination/Home-Telehealth Program on Preventable Health Service Utilization: A Case Control Study. Oral Presentation, HSR&D 2007 National Meeting, February 21-23, Arlington, VA.

Donovan NJ, **Veloza CA**, Heaton SC, Coster W, Waid-Ebbs K, Wen PS, Kimberg C, Piantieri S. Developing a Computer Adaptive Measure of Functional Cognition for TBI: Conceptualizing Functional Cognition across the Continuum of Care. Oral Presentation, HSR&D 2007 National Meeting, February 21-23, Arlington, VA.

Mkanta WN, **Uphold CR**. Longitudinal Study of Patient Satisfaction with Care in Men with HIV Infection. Oral Presentation, HSR&D 2007 National Meeting, February 21-23, Arlington, VA.

Rittman MR, Forman J, Friedemann-Sanchez G, **Boylstein C**, Damschroder L, Partin M, Hogan M, Griffin J, Heisler M. Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Workshop Presentation, HSR&D 2007 National Meeting, February 21-23, Arlington, VA.

Cowper DC, **Jia H**, **Qin H**, Reker DM. Veterans, Multiple System Use, and Stroke Rehabilitation: Who Gets What from Where? Poster Presentation, HSR&D 2007 National Meeting, February 21-23, Arlington, VA.

Vogel WB, Berlowitz DR, Tsilimingras D, Hoenig HM, **Young LJ**, **Cowper DC**, Duncan PW. Function-Based Risk Adjustment in Statistical Models: Systems vs. Components. Poster Presentation, HSR&D 2007 National Meeting, February 21-23, Arlington, VA

Ried, LD. Lipid Monitoring in Veterans Living with Schizophrenia Treated with Second-Generation Antipsychotics, Contributed papers poster session, American Pharmacists Association Annual Meeting and Exposition, March 16-19, 2007, Atlanta, Georgia.

Garman PM, **Ried, LD**, Bengtson MA, Hsu C. Monitoring Glucose Regulation Parameters in Veterans Living with Schizophrenia-Related Disorders and Switched from One Second-Generation Antipsychotic to Another, Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy Conference, April 11-14, 2007, San Diego, CA.