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Upcoming Conferences

November 6-10, 2004
American Public Health Association (APHA)
Annual Meeting, Washington, DC

December 1-3, 2004
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) National Meeting, Washington, DC

November 19, 2004
RORC All Staff Retreat, University Hilton Hotel, Gainesville, FL

February 16-18, 2005
HSR&D National Meeting: Improving Care for Veterans with Chronic Illnesses, Washington, DC



Visit the new
**Stroke QUERI
Web Site!**

www.va.gov/stroke-queri

CELEBRATING OUR THIRD YEAR AS A COE

Highlights of the Past Year

In the third year of operation, we continued to recruit additional investigators and staff to support and expand the mission of the RORC. A national effort to fill our Associate Director position was successful during this past year with the recruitment of Rebecca J. Beyth, MD, MS from the Houston COE who will join the staff in January 2005. We have hired and continue to expand our administrative support for the RORC. In total, we currently have 59 staff members. This number includes 18 core investigators, 6 core staff, 23 project staff, 4 post-doctoral fellows, and 3 pre-doctoral trainees.

In addition to the core Center funding, the annual VA funded research and training portfolio at the RORC was \$2,521,706. The RORC was successful in obtaining the newest QUERI Center, the Stroke QUERI, and funding for the Center began in April. In FY-04, QUERI funding totaled \$270,279. Center investigators also have annual extramural funds totaling \$2,546,359. We received funding for two HSR&D Investigator Initiated Research and one RR&D IIR project in FY04. Another project submitted to RR&D in June received a fundable score and will commence in FY05. For the December cycle, we will be submitting 2 proposals to HSR&D and 1 proposal to RR&D.

Currently, RORC investigators are working on projects to 1) examine population level effects of stroke rehabilitation services,

2) evaluate the relationships between structure, process and outcomes of stroke rehabilitation, 3) assess utilization of community based nursing homes for rehabilitation, 4) use VA databases to assess disability states and associated health care utilization patterns, 5) develop new stroke outcomes measures and assess different methods of acquiring outcomes data, 6) describe stroke recovery and the influences of ethnic diversity, and 7) determine the appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of assistive technology and tele-health for homebound veterans.

A major source of our work in the past year focused on the refinement of the FY01 Integrated Stroke Outcomes Database (ISOD) and creation of the FY02 ISOD. We continue to work with the VA Central Office staff to increase the number of stroke patients who receive a functional status assessment. We are using available data sources to collaborate with VACO PM&RS to identify gaps in access to rehabilitation services.

During the past year, the RORC was awarded the Stroke QUERI Research Coordinating Center. The mission of the Stroke Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (Stroke QUERI) is to employ the QUERI process to reduce stroke risk and maximize the functional status and quality of life of veterans with stroke.



QUERI ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR TO VISIT RORC

Dr. Francis recently joined the Office of Research and Development to coordinate system-wide implementation of evidence-based practice through VA's Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI). Board-certified in internal medicine, geriatrics, and medical management, Dr. Francis brings broad experience in clinical medicine, education, data analysis, and the management of complex health systems. In his capacity as the Associate Director for QUERI, Dr. Francis is visiting all existing QUERI Centers. On November 17-18, he will be in Gainesville to meet with members of the Stroke QUERI.

FEATURED INVESTIGATOR

James P. Stansbury, PhD, Anthropologist, is a specialist in medical anthropology whose research focuses on problems of child nutrition and health in Latin American settings, and cultural issues surrounding the treatment and rehabilitation of neurological disorders, both in the United States and Latin America. He has also contributed to the literature on gender in the treatment of prostate cancer and cultural perceptions of risk in HIV/AIDS. Stansbury has been an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Florida since 1997, and taught at universities in Kentucky, Pennsylvania and New Mexico. He has conducted research in Ecuador, Honduras and the U.S., as well as contributed to international development activities in Bolivia and Nicaragua. He is currently seeking tenure in the Department of Anthropology. Most recently, he directed a portion of his research effort to the topic of ethnic disparities in stroke and rehabilitation following a Fellowship with the U.S. Veterans Health Administration. Dr. Stansbury is continuing his affiliation with the Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center and is a primary investigator on an initiative that will examine ethnic variations in veterans' trust in rehabilitation care and providers. Dr. Stansbury was an active member of the Focus 1 group at the RORC as a post-doctoral fellow and is continuing his collaboration with a number of investigators on their research projects.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Stansbury J, Sierra M. Risks, Stigma and Honduran Garifuna Conceptions of HIV/AIDS. *Social Science and Medicine* (in press).

Stansbury J, Reid KJ, Reker DM, Duncan PW, Marshall CR, Rittman M. Why Ethnic Designation Matters for Stroke Rehabilitation: Comparing VA Administrative Data and Clinical Records. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development* 2004; 41(3), May/June.

Stansbury J, Mathewson-Chapman M, Grant K. Gender schema and prostate cancer: veterans' cultural model of masculinity. *Medical Anthropology* 2003; 22(2):175-204.

Stansbury JP, Barrios R, Palencia R, Rojas C, Medina MT. After the Hurricane: Nutritional Status of Under-five Areas of Honduras. *Nutritional Anthropology* 2001; 24(1):3-7.

RORC WELCOMES NEW PRE- AND POST-DOCS

The RORC is pleased to introduce the outstanding new pre- and postdoctoral students who have joined the staff.

Arlene Schmid (pre-doc) received her B.S. and MS in occupational therapy in May of 1997. After five years of clinical experience she has returned to school to complete her PhD in rehabilitation sciences through the O.T. department at the University of Florida. Her research interests include falls and the development of fear of falling in the elderly as well as prevention and treatment of chronic disease and disability through rehabilitation .

Charles Ellis (pre-doc) is a doctoral candidate in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Florida. He has special interests in adult neurogenic communication disorders and understanding the interaction of culture and language on the outcomes of neurogenic communication disorders. His research interests include subcortical mechanisms that influence language and language disorders in African Americans.

Jeanne Hayes (post-doc) received her PhD in sociology with special interest in gender and medical sociology from the University of Kansas in May, 2003. In addition, Jeanne has significant coursework and experience in qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Her research interests include care coordination, caregiving, and disability.

Jami DelliFraine (post-doc) received her Ph.D. in Health Services Organization and Research from the Health Administration Department at Virginia Commonwealth University in May, 2004. Jami has experience in risk adjustment, quantitative analysis, and structural equation modeling. Her research interests include organizational specialization and outcomes of care.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES: JAMES P. STANSBURY, PHD

Dr. James P. Stansbury main research focus is to understand ethnic variation in veterans' trust in rehabilitation care and providers. The goals for his research are in line with long-term objectives that enhance a patient-centered approach to VA rehabilitation efforts, while assuring health equity. These include:

- contributing to the understanding of ethnic variations in patients' trust in their providers and care;
- promoting use of a rehabilitation specific trust scale that adequately captures cultural variations among veterans and takes into account their concerns with equity in care;
- gaining further understanding about patients' psychosocial orientations toward rehabilitation care and their relationship with functional outcomes; and
- enhancing our knowledge about the range of settings in which VA rehabilitation occurs.

Given the ethnic diversity of VA rehabilitation patients and the system's reliance on team care in a variety of inpatient settings, measurement and descriptive work linking interpersonal and collective dimensions of the trust construct with orientations to complex multidisciplinary settings is an important area for study.

Pilot research on the topic of trust in rehabilitation care in the context of a Geriatric Evaluation and Man-

agement (GEMU) at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System was carried out by Dr. Stansbury during his post-doctoral fellowship at the Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center. This research provided a successful trial of combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques in exploring unaddressed domains in trust and the utility of existing scales. Dr. Stansbury found qualitative elicitations (freelists) and interviews revealed elements vital to patients' ideas about trust that are not measured by existing scales. These elements include concerns such as equity in interactions and the consistency of information communicated by different providers in inpatient, multidisciplinary settings.

Further, Dr. Stansbury found that veteran patients participate enthusiastically and resonate to the opportunity to comment on their care, to communicate their personal experiences with providers and care, and propose general perspectives on trust. Finally, there appears to be some evidence that significant ethnic differences in trust in rehabilitation providers and care exist in the VHA.

Dr. Stansbury is currently teaming up with investigators from Minneapolis, Kansas City, West Los Angeles, and San Antonio to develop a multi-site proposal to continue investigation of ethnic variations in trust.

HSR&D NATIONAL MEETING WILL FOCUS ON CHRONIC ILLNESSES

VA Health Services Research and Development Service will hold its National Meeting February 16-18, 2005 in Washington DC. The theme of this year's conference is, "Improving Care for Veterans with Chronic Illnesses" and is hosted by the Houston Center for Quality of Care and Utilization Studies. The National Meeting provides VA investigators the opportunity to present the results of their research to colleagues, clinicians, and policy makers. Highlights of the conference include a keynote address, plenary paper sessions, exhibits, workshops and a poster session. A "Call for Abstracts" has already been issued to the field. For questions concerning content or processing of abstract submissions, please contact Barbara Kimmel by phone at (713) 794-8601 or by e-mail at Barbara.Kimmel@med.va.gov.

RR&D PORTFOLIO MANAGER VISITS RORC

Reuben Wright, Ph.D. visited Gainesville on June 15-17. Dr. Wright attended the operations meeting on June 15th to learn about the many activities ongoing at the Center. In addition, he was escorted by Dr. Andrea Behrman to view the new Human Performance Laboratory. Dr. Wright is an Exercise Physiologist and is part of the VA Central Office Rehabilitation Research and Development Service staff where he serves as a Portfolio Manager.

RORC MISSION

To enhance access, quality,
and efficiency of
rehabilitation services
through interdisciplinary
research and
dissemination activities.

CONTACT US

Rehab Outcomes Research Center
Research Service (151B)
VA Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32608

Phone: (352) 376-1611, x 6843
Fax: (352) 271-4540
Email: rorc@med.va.gov

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Ellen Esparolini, Elizabeth Cope,
and Amber Larsen

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RORC RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Chumbler N, Rittman M, Van Puymbroeck M, Vogel W, Qin H. The sense of coherence, burden, and depressive symptoms in informal caregivers during the first month after stroke. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 2004; 19: 944-953.

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Faxon D, Schwamm L, Pasternak R, Peterson E, McNeil B, Bufalino V, **Brass L, Duncan P,** et al. Improving quality of care through disease management: principles and recommendations from the American Heart Association's Expert Panel on Disease Management. *Stroke* 2004; 35: 1527-1530.

Gold D, Shipp K, Pieper C, **Duncan P,** Martinez S, Lyles K. Group treatment improves trunk strength and psychological status in older women with vertebral fractures: results of a randomized, clinical trial. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 2004; 52: 1471-1478.

Johnson C, Dobalian A, Burkhard J, Hedgecock D, Harman J. Factors predicting lawsuits against nursing homes in Florida 1997-2001. *Gerontologist* 2004; 44: 339-347.

Rittman M, Fairecloth C, Boylstein C, Gubrium J, Williams C, **Van Puymbroeck M,** et al. The Experience of Time in the Transition from Hospital to Home Following Stroke. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development* 2004; 41: 259-268.

Stansbury J, Reid K, Reker D, Duncan P, Marshall C, **Rittman M.** Why ethnic designation matters for stroke rehabilitation: Comparing VA administrative data and clinical records. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development* 2004; 41: 269-278.

Uphold C, Maruenda J, Yarandi H, Sleasman J, Bender B. HIV and older adults: clinical outcomes in the era of HAART. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* 2004; 30: 16-24.

STAFF NEWS

Jami Dellifraime won the Best Paper Based on a Dissertation award from the Health Care Management Division of the Academy of Management. She received \$500 and a plaque. Jami was also a Newman Award finalist at the Academy of Management.

Connie Uphold was accepted for Fellowship into the American Academy of Nursing. She now will have new initials after her Ph.D. — FAAN

Pam Duncan was presented the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Columbia University for distinguished contributions in the field of physical therapy.

A job well done is extended to **Jared Deane** and **Kathy Byers**, both who graduated at the end of the summer session at UF. RORC has a new "Pair-O-Docs."

Welcome aboard to **Wendi Spisak** who joined the administrative RORC staff.

Helena Chapman received the 2004 APHA's Environment Section Student Scholarship and will receive a stipend to pay for registration and travel costs to the APHA meeting in November. Helena also received a Best Poster Award at the Hispanic Graduate Student Association First Annual Symposium at UF. Wow!