



THIS ISSUE

<i>Stroke Guidelines</i>	1
<i>RORC Admin Core</i>	2
<i>LEAPS Grant</i>	3
<i>Recent Publications</i>	4

Upcoming Conferences

September 25 - 28, 2005
**130th Annual Meeting
of the American
Neurological Association**

San Diego, CA
October 21 - 21, 2005
2005 Stroke Update
Phoenix, AZ

October 25 - 27, 2005
**2005 National Stroke
Association (NSA) Stroke
Team Meetings (Southeast)**
Orlando, FL

November 12 - 16, 2005
Neuroscience 2005
Washington, DC

February 1 - 4, 2006
**International Conference
on Aging, Disability and
Independence**
St. Petersburg, FL

February 16 - 18, 2006
**International Stroke
Conference**
Kissimmee, FL

AHA ENDORSES VA/DoD STROKE REHAB GUIDELINES

The Stroke Council of the American Heart Association endorsed the Department of Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense guidelines for stroke rehabilitation, published in the September issue of *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*. Stroke rehabilitation should begin when a stroke is diagnosed and involve a multidisciplinary team that includes survivors, caregivers and family members, according to new practice guidelines endorsed by the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association.



Pamela W. Duncan, PhD

Stroke is a leading cause of disability in the United States, leaving up to 70 percent of survivors with moderate to severe disability. Multidisciplinary rehabilitation programs initiated early after stroke can minimize functional impairment, according to Pamela Duncan, Ph.D., co-chair of the writing committee, RORC Director, Stroke-QUERI Research Coordinator and Director of the Department of Aging and Geriatric Research at the University of Florida College of Medicine.

Stroke rehabilitation begins during the acute hospitalization phase, as soon as the diagnosis of stroke is established and life-threatening complications are controlled, according to the panel. A number of specific recommendations are included in the guidelines, including:

- ◆ Delivering Post-stroke care in a multidisciplinary rehabilitation setting or stroke unit;
- ◆ Assessing patients early using the National Institutes of Health Stroke Scale of stroke severity;
- ◆ Initiating early rehabilitation therapies;
- ◆ Testing for swallowing ability – impairment can lead to pneumonia and death;
- ◆ Preventing recurrent stroke;
- ◆ Preventing deep vein blood clots by walking 50 feet daily and taking blood thinners;
- ◆ Developing comprehensive and individualized treatment plans;
- ◆ Treating depression or emotional disorders;
- ◆ Performing communication and related cognitive disorders evaluations ; and
- ◆ Acknowledging that the survivor, caregiver, and family members are all important in the rehabilitation process.

The writing panel developing the VA/DoD guidelines includes Barbara Bates, M.D.; John Y. Choi, M.D.; Jonathan J. Glasberg, M.A., P.T.; Glenn D. Graham, M.D., Ph.D.; Richard C. Katz, Ph.D.; Kerri Lamberty, Ph.D.; Dean Reker, Ph.D.; and Richard Zorowitz, M.D.

For more information on stroke, visit the Stroke-QUERI Web site:

www.va.gov/stroke-queri

or the American Stroke Association Web site:

www.strokeassociation.org.

MEET THE...RORC ADMINISTRATIVE CORE



Wanda Hines is the front desk secretary / receptionist at the RORC, she is responsible for welcoming visitors; inventorying office supplies; scheduling meetings held in the RORC Conference Room for the office staff; and assisting staff with copying, faxing, and distribution of incoming mail. She is presently working on an AA degree in Sociology and plans to pursue her Bachelor's in the same field. Wanda is also interested in classical and gospel music and has worked with other recording artists as both a lead and backup vocalist. She has aspirations of becoming a professional recording artist in the future. She also enjoys attending church regularly, traveling, and helping others.



Wendi Spisak came to the RORC from the University of Florida, Department of Surgery and has just passed her year anniversary with us. Wendi has many responsibilities at the RORC, including all travel planning for the Center, communication with VACO for travel expenses, fund tracking and reimbursement. She also shares responsibility for making purchases and tracking expenditures. Her responsibilities also include monitoring the training requirements of more than 70 investigators and staff through TEMPO. She assists Administrative Officer in keeping continuing records of competencies for JHACO requirements. Probably the most important to all of us at the RORC is her responsibility for making sure that our time is input into payroll correctly! Wendi is the mother of three boys; Brandt, age 14; Aaron, age 10 and Joshua age 6. Her academic focus is in the areas of developmental psychology, sociology and child development.



Amber Waters has served on the Administrative Core with the RORC since May of 2003. Some of her contributions include being the team leader for the research project coordinator group, program coordinator for a collaborative research seminar series, and administrative coordinator for the HSR&D funded Stroke QUERI center. Amber brings over 20 years of experience in organizational and administrative management to the research environment.



Sonya Starling (Gallagher) has been with the RORC for just over 2 years now. Her main job focus is assisting RORC investigators with grant compliance. In this process, Sonya tracks guidelines for approximately 10 federal and over 30 non-federal grants. She began this position in January and has since implemented our internal RORC Mock Review Section held twice per year to help produce quality proposals from our facility. An important part of grant compliance is the fulfillment of all required training mandated by the University of Florida and the VA. Sonya also provides guidance to investigators and their support staff with the submissions to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the NF/SG Subcommittee of Clinical Investigation (SCI), where each proposal must maintain approval by both committees during the life of the study. Sonya was recently married on September 10th! When she can find free time, Sonya enjoys any craft project to keep her busy.



Charisma Brown serves as a Program Support Assistant to the VA RORC. Ms. Brown joined the RORC team in July 2005. She is responsible for overseeing the calendars of the Director and Associate Director. Ms. Brown's primary duties are arranging travel, posting meetings, and acting as a liaison for the RORC staff and others requesting meetings. Charisma is the proud grandmother of Malcolm Elijah, born April 11, 2005.

Kristen Wing came to the RORC in August 2002 after a 12-year Marketing and Graphic/Web Design career in the private sector. Currently, she serves as the Webmaster for the RORC and Stroke QUERI Web sites, the Co-Lead of the Stroke QUERI Dissemination Core, the Dissemination Specialist on Dr. Rebecca Beyth's Stroke QUERI Locally Initiated Project, and Co-Lead of the RORC's Annual Report Template (ART) Team. Kristen's first role with the RORC was as a Research Assistant for RORC Investigator Dr. Bruce Vogel. She considers her time with Dr. Vogel invaluable as it provided an excellent opportunity to learn about the VA research system and terminology, VA and Non-VA funding mechanisms, putting together research proposals, and conducting literature searches and creating publication libraries. Kristen received her Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification earlier this year, and in her spare time she has been studying for the GRE exam with the goal of pursuing a graduate degree in the field of Public Health and/or Educational Psychology.



Elizabeth "Liddy" Cope has been with the RORC since funding began in October 2001. She has held several different positions at the RORC, but has found her fit as the Information Technology Specialist for the RORC. She is responsible for providing information and assistance to over 70 RORC employees on all IT issues (computers, printers, copiers, telephones, fax machines, scanners, software installs, Data Security, etc.). Liddy is also responsible for purchasing all IT equipment and software. Liddy is completing her degree in the Networking Services Technology program at Santa Fe Community College. She made the Dean's List for the Spring Term 2005 by maintaining a GPA of at least 3.5 for the current term while carrying a full academic load. Liddy is engaged and is planning her wedding for Summer 2006. Liddy has a son named Gavin who started Kindergarten this year at Terwilliger.



Ellen Esparolini serves as the Administrative Officer for the RORC and has been with the Center since February of 2002. Her responsibilities include the financial management of the Center's core and project budgets as well as the processing and management of over 40 contracts for services with the University of Florida. Ellen is also responsible for the overall management of the Annual Report Template (ART), an comprehensive report to the VHA HSR&D Service detailing the Center's Core and QUERI funding, all ongoing VA and non-VA projects, career development awards, publications, and presentations. Ellen also serves as the RORC human resources manager, RORC space manager and is a member of both the RORC Operations Committee and the Administrative Core.



LEAPS GRANT FUNDED, DUNCAN TO LEAD TEAM

Pamela W. Duncan, PhD, FAPTA, RORC Director, has been awarded a \$13.5 million, five-year federal grant to lead a national group of interdisciplinary researchers who will test rehabilitation methods for stroke patients. Researchers, including RORC Affiliate Investigators **Andrea Behrman**, PhD and **Steve Nadeau**, MD and other collaborators at the BRRRC, will study 400 stroke patients, ages 18 and older, to ascertain the best timing to begin physical therapy and the effectiveness of a particular therapy method to reduce walking disabilities after a stroke. The study, known as the Locomotor Experience Applied Post-Stroke trial, or LEAPS, is funded by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes and the National Center for Medical Rehabilitative Research. UF and University of Southern California researchers will partner with clinicians at The Brooks Rehabilitation Jacksonville, Florida; Florida Hospital in Orlando; Long Beach Memorial Hospital in Long Beach, Calif.; Centinela Freeman Memorial Hospital in Inglewood, Calif.; and Sharp Rehabilitation Hospital in San Diego. Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital is the lead site. The focus of the clinical trial is a new, relatively untested therapy method that is being rapidly adopted as a post-stroke walking rehabilitation intervention. The approach involves supporting patients' body weight using a suspended harness while they walk on a treadmill and overground practice. The multi-site, randomized trial will assess whether there is a difference in the proportion of subjects who successfully recover walking ability using this walking therapy versus a control group given a home-based, low-intensity exercise intervention. Researchers will gauge whether initiating the therapy two months after stroke versus six months after stroke makes a difference in its effectiveness, and will seek to identify the optimal duration of therapy. Patients will be reassessed one year after treatment. The study will evaluate the success of the therapeutic methods tested by measuring how much walking ability study subjects regain, and whether that improvement is great enough to improve their activities of daily living and quality of life. The study is also financially supported by the UF Brooks Center for Rehabilitation Studies.

RORC MISSION

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

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www.va.gov/rorc

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RORC RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Select Publications — May-September 2005

Duncan P, Reker D, Kwon S, Lai S, Studenski S, Perera S et al. Measuring Stroke Impact With the Stroke Impact Scale: Telephone Versus Mail Administration in Veterans With Stroke. *Med Care*, 1 May 2005; 43(5):507-515.

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**REMINDER: HSR&D ABSTRACT SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS
OCTOBER 14, 2005**

**HSR&D ANNUAL MEETING WEEK OF FEBRUARY 13, 2006
WASHINGTON, DC**