

**February
2008**

Northwest Center for Outcomes Research in Older Adults: A VA HSR&D Center of Excellence

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Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System (VAPSHCS)

Center Research Improves Care for VA Patients With Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

More than 20 per cent of VA patients suffer from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), commonly known as emphysema. To date over 20 million Americans have COPD, and the disease is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. COPD causes chronic breathlessness and can seriously restrict activities that require even limited exertion. A recent American Lung Association survey revealed that approximately half or more of all COPD patients reported that the disease limited their performance on tasks requiring normal physical exertion, completing household chores, engaging in social activities, participating in family activities, and sleeping.

improve the health care of patients with COPD by enhancing their ability to manage symptoms at home, which leads to improved quality of life, and prevention of exacerbations requiring RE visits and hospitalizations. Dr. Fan developed a COPD Management Questionnaire that measures access to care, patient knowledge, and how well patients feel they are managing their COPD. He found two modifiable risk



Vincent Fan, MD, MPH

Medications that relax and open air passages in the lungs are essential to managing COPD symptoms. Medications currently available, however, have not modified the long-term decline in lung function which is the hallmark of this disease.

Many patients with COPD have frequent exacerbations (i.e. a sudden and prolonged worsening of symptoms) that require emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Throughout the VA in 2004, there were more than 16,500 discharges for COPD with a mean length of stay of 6.5 days and an average cost of \$9,389 per patient.

Dr. Vincent Fan, MD, MPH, studies ways to

factors (continuity of care and ability to cope with COPD) that are strongly associated with patients' satisfaction, suggesting that these factors should be considered in future interventions of self-management.

Improved disease management programs for COPD may positively affect patients self-care, thereby improving symptoms and decreasing exacerbations. With this in mind, Dr. Fan initiated "Bronchitis and Emphysema Advice and Training to Prevent Hospitalizations," (BREATH) an intervention designed to enable patients with COPD to more effectively manage their disease by monitoring their symptoms and initiating appropriate action when symptoms worsen.

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"Soul Catcher," a Northwest Coast Indian symbol used to ward off spirits that bring physical or mental illness.

Marvin Oliver, artist



25th Anniversary Celebration

Highlights of 25 years (1982-2007)

1982: Proposal for Center approved for funding.

1987: Began implementation of a Congressionally mandated Adult Day Health Care Evaluation.

1988: Patient decision-making study leads to refinement of hospital policies for "Do-not-resuscitate" (DNR) decisions and establishment of an Ethics Committee at Seattle VAMC.

1992: Center sponsors first HSR&D State-of-the-Art Conference on Community Based Long Term Care.

1995: Adult Day Health Care study completed, disseminated nationwide, and used to modify VACO directives.

1996: Center findings used to design Foot Care Component for National VA Diabetes Guidelines.

2000: Center staff oversee National Evaluation of Community Based Outpatient Clinics assessment mandated by the Under Secretary for Health.

2001: Annual Report Database created by the Center is rolled out for use by all HSR&D Centers.

2007: Office of Research Oversight and Office of Information and Technology describe Center data security and research network as a model.

The NW Center for Outcomes Research in Older Adults celebrated its 25th year as a VA HSR&D Center of Excellence on October 24, 2007. The celebration festivities were attended by Center personnel and guests from VA Central Office, Group Health Cooperative, and VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

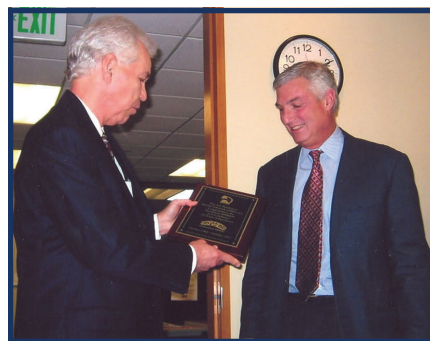
The program began with welcoming remarks from the current Director, Dr. **Stephan Fihn**, followed by reminiscences from the previous Directors, Drs. **Tom Inui** and **Richard Deyo**. Each spoke about impacts and successes during their tenure and how the Center has progressed since its inception. Nine current core investigators also presented their research and outcomes.

Susan Schiffner from VACO presented Dr. **Fihn** with a "Congratulations for 25 Years of Services as a HSR&D COE" plaque signed by **Seth Eisen**, MD, Director, Health Services R&D. Mr. **Ken Hudson**, Chief, Fiscal Service, VA Puget Sound Health Care System, then presented Dr. **Fihn** with a VA NW Health Network (VISN 20) congratulatory plaque.

The program finale was a lively panel discussion on "Opportunities and Outcomes for Health Services Research Initiatives in Emerging Health Systems." Drs. **Richard Deyo**, **Stephan Fihn**, **Tom Inui**, and **Eric Larson** were discussants.



Dr. Fihn accepts the VACO 25th Anniversary award from Susan Schiffner on behalf of the Center.



Dr. Fihn (r) accepts the VISN 20 congratulatory plaque from Ken Hudson (l) on behalf of the Center.



NW Center for Outcomes Research in Older Adults personnel

Center News

HSR&D National Meeting

“Implementation across the Nation: From Bedside and Clinic to Community and Home” is the theme of the 2008 HSR&D National Meeting. Five Center investigators will present collaborative research efforts via oral presentations or workshops.

Chris Bryson, MD, MS, “Combined Medication Adherence to Cardiovascular Risk Reduction Therapy.”

Stephan Fihn, MD, MPH, “Trends in Mortality Following Acute Myocardial Infarction in the Veterans Health Administration and Medicare-Funded Hospitals.”

Yu-Fang Li, PhD, “Measuring Nurse Staffing Levels: VA and Non-VA Perspectives.”

Chuan-Fen Liu, PhD, “Nurse Staffing and Direct Inpatient Care Costs.”

Xiao-Hua Andrew Zhou, PhD, “Statistical Methods for the Analysis of Health Care Costs.”

Eight Center researchers are also senior authors on posters: **Cory Bolkan**, PhD, **Laura Bonner**, PhD, **Edmund Chaney**, PhD, **Danielle Frank**, MD, **Eric Hawkins**, PhD, **Christian Helfrich**, PhD, **Yu-Fang Li**, PhD, **Chuan-Fen Liu**, PhD.

Research News

“Impact of the DoD Paradigm Shift on VA Amputee Prosthetic Care.”

Gayle E. Reiber, PhD, MPH

This project is surveying major amputees from Vietnam, Desert Storm, Afghanistan, and Iraqi conflicts to document amputee health and comorbidity, function, prosthetic use and prosthetic satisfaction. The study investigators will determine future utilization and cost of prosthetics and assistive devices using three different cost scenarios: 1) outsourced community fair-market costs, 2) outsourced discounted Medicare costs, and 3) VA in-house fabrication costs with direct purchase of components and assembly by skilled prosthetists. This is the first study to gather this type of data in detail.

“National Dissemination of a Clinical Reminder for Brief Alcohol Counseling.”

Kathy A. Bradley, MD, MPH, **Dan R. Kivlahan**, PhD

Brief alcohol counseling has been shown to be effective in reducing hazardous drinking. With a goal to improve rates of brief alcohol counseling in VA and funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Drs. Bradley and Kivlahan and the Seattle-based Substance Use Disorder QUERI team developed a clinical reminder (CR) for brief alcohol counseling for implementation in CPRS. In collaboration with Dr. Bryan Vopll, the CR was piloted at an 8-site facility, underwent formative evaluation, and was revised based on user feedback. The CR was recommended for use by Dr. Edward Post, Primary Care Director-Mental Health Integration, and Dr. Michael Mayo-Smith, Director, Primary Care Service VISN 1, to meet new 2008 performance measures for follow-up of patients screening positive for alcohol misuse, and was disseminated nationally in the fall of 2007.

HSR&D Northwest Center of Excellence Mission Statement

I.

To conduct research that addresses important health care problems and is of the highest scientific rigor.

II.

To provide high caliber training in health services research.

III.

To maintain collaborative ties with neighboring research institutions.

IV.

To provide prompt and useful assistance in response to requests from the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, Seattle and VA Headquarters.

V.

To maintain a balanced mix of funding support from multiple sources.

Fellows' Profiles

Postdoctoral Fellows

The Postdoctoral Fellowship is directed toward increasing skills in health services research. Fellows are expected to engage in full-time research on a publishable health services project, to participate in related educational activities including selected course work at the University of Washington and participate in VA research review meetings.

Cory R. Bolkan, PhD

Andrew J. Brunskill, MB, MPH

Ann M. Derleth, PhD, MSPH

Eric J. Hawkins, PhD

David R. Hekman, PhD

Lauren Beste, MD, moved to the Pacific Northwest from the East Coast in July. Over the years Lauren has worked as a wildland firefighter, ambulance attendant, archeological dig team member, and editorial assistant at a medical journal before finally settling down to being a general internist. She is a graduate of Penn State and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She recently completed her residency in General Internal Medicine at Brown University.

Lauren's current research interests include Hepatitis C treatment attrition in veterans. The majority of Hepatitis C patients do not receive antiviral treatment, and many who begin do not complete the 24-48 week regimen. She wants to understand the factors that predict successful treatment so that more patients can be cured of the disease. Lauren is also working with Dr. Katharine Bradley to examine surgical outcomes in veterans who misuse alcohol. Lauren is working towards her Masters of Health Services degree at the University of Washington.

Outside of work, Lauren and her husband, Terapat, have fun by exploring the great outdoors in Washington. They also enjoy movies, cooking, and traveling overseas as much as possible. Although they miss their families back east, Lauren and Terapat are adapting cheerfully to life in Seattle.

Cory Bolkan, PhD, began her fellowship with HSR&D in 2007. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Virginia and completed her PhD at Oregon State University, where she focused on geropsychology. As a graduate student she investigated personality processes and depressive symptoms in older adults to understand relationships between mental and physical health, social support, and health behaviors. In addition, she spent five years as a mental health professional in both community and in-patient settings.

Her current research interests broadly include mental health and aging, social psychological

processes and depression, and implementation research. She has been working under the mentorship of Dr. Ed Chaney on the TIDES and WAVES studies to examine im-



plementation of an evidence-based collaborative care model to improve depression management in primary care. Outside of work, Cory enjoys following local sports teams (Go Seahawks!), sampling Seattle coffee, planning her next foreign travel adventure, or just relishing Seattle's infrequent sunshine.

Steven Bradley, MD, is a first-year cardiology fellow and student in the University of Washington's School of Public Health obtaining an MPH in Health Services. He earned a BS with Honors in Bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin and



an MD at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He completed his training in Internal Medicine at the University of Washington and a year as Chief Resident at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. Steve's research interests pertain to use of appropriateness of care in ischemic heart disease and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Fellows' Profiles

David Hekman, PhD, was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan and currently calls Seattle his home. He finished his PhD. in organizational studies at University of Washington Business School in 2007. He accepted a job as a professor of healthcare management starting in 2008 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee business school. David's research at the VA focuses on understanding whether organizational culture leads some VA facilities to provide better care than others. In his spare time, he enjoys going out to dinner with his wife, or going to the zoo with his two young sons.



Continued from cover

The study is funded by VA Cooperative Studies Program and is coordinated through the Massachusetts Veterans Epidemiology Research and Information Center of the VA Boston Health Care System.

BREATH is tailored specifically to the VA setting and the care of enrolled patients is integrated into the patient's overall process of care.

The goal of BREATH is to develop interventions to reduce COPD exacerbations. Interventions include patient education, case management, and establishment of an action plan. The hypothesis is that veterans with COPD who receive a self-management program incorporating education sessions, development of an action plan, and case management will have a decreased risk of COPD hospitalization, compared to standard COPD care.

Elements of the BREATH study were developed using self-efficacy theory, a recognized and powerful predictor of health-related behavior change. Case-management programs like this have been used to improve outcomes and to reduce health care utilization among patients with other chronic diseases including diabetes, congestive heart failure

and asthma, suggesting that this approach may be successful in managing COPD.

Dr. Fan is also investigating the immune response of COPD patients, historically an area poorly understood in this population, Bacteria often colonize the lungs of patients with COPD, and there is increasing evidence that lung inflammation is due to the immune system's response to the bacteria.

Dr. Fan's is researching the variability in immune stimulation in patients with stable COPD in his study, "Innate Immune Response and Severity of COPD." The study looks to identify patients that demonstrate hyper and hypo immune response, and determine whether there is an association between immune system response and air flow obstruction. This is primarily a laboratory-based study, analyzing blood from patients with COPD and observing the proteins that regulate the duration and intensity of the immune response and mediate communication between cells.

Dr. Fan is an Investigator at the NW Center of Excellence, a VA staff physician, and an Assistant Professor in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care at the University of Washington.

Post-MD Fellows

The Post-MD Fellowship is centered around the development of research skills. Participants apply these skills by completing a publishable research project by the end of two years of training. They also enhance their clinical skills in ambulatory care and develop abilities necessary to assume academic faculty positions in medicine or other primary care disciplines.

Lauren A. Beste, MD

Steven M. Bradley, MD

Danielle Frank, MD

Johnny Y. Mei, MD

Lisa H. Williams, MD

Recent Publications

Recently Funded Projects

Alcohol Misuse and the Risk of Post-Surgical Complications and Mortality (IAC 06-021), Katherine A. Bradley, MD, MPH

Bronchitis and Emphysema Advice and Training to Reduce Hospitalizations (BREATH) (CSP 560), Vincent S. Fan, MD, MPH

An Intervention to Enhance Function in Severe Cardio-pulmonary Illness (IIR NRI 04-242-2), Cynthia M. Dougherty, PhD and Bonnie G. Steele, PhD ARNP

Detection of Intimate Partner Violence (IIR NRI 04-040-2), April A. Gerlock, PhD, ARNP

Assessing Threats to Value in Computerized Patient Care Documentations (IIR 05-019-2), Kenric W. Hammond, MD

Senior Coordinated Referral Study (SCORE) (IAD 06-036-1), Susan C. Hedrick, PhD and Sheri Reder, PhD

The Impact of Neighborhood Environment in Veteran Health and Survival (IIR 04-436-2), Karin M. Nelson, MD, MSHS

P Ho, S Luther, F Masoudi, **I Gupta, E Lowy, C Maynard**, A Sales, E Peterson, **S Fihn**, J Rumsfeld. Inpatient and follow-up cardiology care and mortality for acute coronary syndrome patients in the Veterans Health Administration. *Am Heart J* 2007; 154(3): 489-494.

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Recent Publications

O Harel, **XHA Zhou**. Multiple imputation: review of theory, implementation and software. *Stat Med*. 2007; 26(16): 3057-77.

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DH Au, **DR Kivlahan**, **CL Bryson**, D Blough, **KA Bradley**. Alcohol screening scores and risk of hospitalizations for GI conditions in men. *Alcohol Clin Exp Res*. 2007; 31(3): 443-51.

PJ Kudenchuk, LA Cobb, MK Copass, M Olsufka, **C Maynard**, G Nichol. Transthoracic incremental monophasic versus biphasic defibrillation by emergency responders (TIMBER): a randomized comparison of monophasic with biphasic waveform ascending energy defibrillation for the resuscitation of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest due to ventricular fibrillation. *Circulation*. 2006 Nov; 114(19): 2010-8.

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SE Sherman, J Fotiades, LV Rubenstein, SC Gilman, S Vivell, **EF Chaney**, EM Yano, BL Felker. Teaching systems-based practice to primary care physicians to foster routine implementation of evidence-based depression care. *Acad Med*. 2007; 82(2): 168-75.

CD Helfrich, **YF Li**, DC Mohr, M Meterko, AE Sales. Assessing an organizational culture instrument based on the Competing Values Framework: Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. *Implement Sci*. 2007;2(13).

Risk Factors for In-Hospital Acute Myocardial Infarction (EPP-Fihn), Stephan D. Fihn, MD, MPH

Causal Inferences on Quality of Life with Deaths (IAD 06-088), Xiao-Hua Andrew Zhou, PhD and Susan C. Hedrick, PhD

Organizational Correlates of Adherence to Medication (IIR 07-068), Christopher L. Bryson, MD, MS

Effects of Adherence to Pharmacologic Therapy on Outcomes and Costs among Patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (CI-51755N), David H. Au, MD, MS

During FY07, Center researchers published **96 peer-reviewed articles** and **two book chapters**.

Publications appeared in the **American Journal of Medicine**, **Medical Care**, **American Journal of Epidemiology**, **Archives of Internal Medicine**, and the **Journal of General Internal Medicine**.

Center researchers also presented **52 papers** at national and international conferences.

Investigator Profile

The NW Center of Excellence would like to welcome one of our newest core investigators, **Steve Zeliadt**, PhD, MPH.

Steve earned his PhD in Health Services in 2004 at the University of Washington. He grew up in Des Moines, Iowa and received his BA in Greek and Latin from Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa. He joined the Center after 11 years at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

Newsletter staff informally interviewed Steve, detailed below.

Having grown up in Iowa, why did you decide to move to Seattle?

SZ: I had a friend from Iowa who moved here, so I came out for a summer right after college. Once you're here for the summer ...

You have a background in classics. How did you get interested in the medical field?

SZ: I came really close to going to law school. When I came to Seattle I started a job as a paralegal and was involved with medical litigation, which led to my interest in medical science. After that I took a job at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and worked on issues related to medical litigation, and then with a health economist. That encouraged my interest in health services and health economics.

What are your research interests?

SZ: I'm interested in decision-making in prostate cancer. The type of treatment to have is one of the hardest decisions men have to make, and there's not a lot of information from randomized trials to guide men. I want to evaluate what are true quality-of-life changes that occur with treatment. This can be difficult because men's fear of cancer leads them to downplay side effects or problems due to treatment; really figuring out the burden of treatment is an important priority.

What are you working on currently?

SZ: One of my projects is a pilot study to conduct a feasibility analysis for a larger study of cancer treatment patterns and cancer-related costs in the VA. Among other questions, we are looking for the prevalence rates of 7 cancer types in VISN 20 including lung, colorectal, breast, ovarian, stomach, head/neck, and urologic cancers, and how consistently is detailed cancer information available in the VISN20 databases including month and year of diagnosis, month and year of recurrence (if applicable), stage, grade, and histology at diagnosis.

What interested you in working for HSR&D?

SZ: The VA is the best place in the country to conduct health services research.

What do you like to do for fun?

SZ: Yoga and a lot of bike racing; I'm on a cycling team. I also play bridge. I won a gold medal in both cycling and bridge at the Out Games in Montreal this past summer.



Steve Zeliadt is a Team Captain for the local Starbucks Cycling race team. Co-sponsored by Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, the co-ed team competes in 10 area races a year.

Affiliate Investigators

Edward Boyko, MD, MPH
Edmund Chaney, PhD
Margaret Collins, PhD
Paula Diehr, PhD
April Gerlock, PhD
Barry Goldstein, MD, PhD
Kenric Hammond, MD
Margaret Hammond, MD
Lynne McFarland, PhD
Sheri Reder, PhD
Bonnie Steele, PhD, RN
Bessie Young, MD

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