

HSR&D/RR&D Center of Excellence, Tampa, FL

Maximizing Rehabilitation Outcomes



**HSR&D/RR&D
Research Center of
Excellence**
Maximizing Rehabilitation Outcomes
Tampa, FL

❖ **Gail Powell-Cope, PhD, ARNP, FAAN—Director**

Dr. Powell-Cope is the Center Director as well as Associate Director of Training and Translation. She is the Site Director for the Interprofessional Patient Safety Fellowship Program and HSR&D OAA Postdoctorate Fellowship Programs. She has research expertise in patient falls, fall-related injuries, bed-rail entrapments, safe patient handling, research translation, socio-technical probability risk assessment, and qualitative research methods.



❖ **Steven Scott, DO—Medical Director**

Dr. Scott is the HSR&D/RR&D Research Center of Excellence Medical Director. He is also Chief of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation at the Tampa VA, and Co-Clinical Director of the VA Polytrauma/Blast QUERI Center. A nationally known expert in physical medicine and rehabilitation and polytrauma, he has research expertise in polytrauma and traumatic brain injury.



❖ **Stephen Luther, PhD—Associate Director (Research and Outcomes Measurement)**

Dr. Luther is a psychometrician and outcome researcher with research interests in validation of risk assessment and patient safety measurement tools, as well as medical informatics, particularly in the application of machine learning techniques to the extraction of information from the electronic medical record.



❖ **Jan Jasiewicz, PhD—Associate Director (Laboratories)**

Dr. Jasiewicz's research focuses on movement using sensor technologies.



❖ **Brian W. Schulz, PhD—Assistant Director (Laboratories)**

Dr. Schulz's research interest is the prevention of fall-related injuries and preservation of function with aging.



Investigators

Scott Barnett, PhD

Dr. Barnett earned both his Masters and Doctorate degrees from the University of South Florida in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Dr. Barnett has expertise in data management, research methodology and biostatistics. Prior to leaving Virginia, Dr. Barnett was the primary biostatistician for the Virginia Cardiac Surgery Quality Initiative - the largest state based cardiac surgery database to combine cost data with surgical outcomes in the United States. His current interests are investigating the effects of natural disasters on healthcare utilization among vulnerable veterans such as those veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and traumatic brain injury.



Heather G. Belanger, PhD, ABPP-CN

Heather is a Clinical Neuropsychologist in the TBI/Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, and an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of South Florida. Recently, her research has focused on mild traumatic brain injury treatment and outcomes, neuropsychology of traumatic brain injury, and blast-induced polytrauma. Her primary research interests are in evaluating outcomes following Polytrauma, particularly neuropsychological, mental health, and psychosocial outcomes.



Donald J. Berndt, PhD

Dr. Berndt's work at USF involves teaching in the information systems programs (undergraduate and graduate), as well as selected professional development programs. His research interests include working in medical informatics and data mining the electronic health record as well as health informatics and the application of data warehousing technologies.



Karen Besterman-Dahan, PhD, RD

Dr. Besterman-Dahan is a qualitative researcher with a background in medical anthropology and nutrition. Currently, she has work underway to evaluate innovative approaches for reintegration and retention of veterans into postsecondary education settings. In addition, her research interests include women's health as well as spiritual and cultural issues related to health. Prior to joining the COE in 2008, Dr. Besterman-Dahan participated in mixed method health research in the areas of cancer control and prevention, and conducted a study exploring the intersection of religion and cancer prevention beliefs and behaviors.



Lisa Brown, PhD







Lisa is an Associate Professor in the Department of Aging and Mental Health Disparities at the Florida Mental Health Institute. Dr. Brown completed her internship and postdoctoral fellowship at the James A. Haley Veteran's Hospital, Tampa, Florida, where she specialized in neuropsychology and geropsychology. Dr. Brown's research interests include disaster mental health, assessment and intervention for older adults, mood and anxiety disorders, suicide, dementia, and long-term care. She consults and collaborates with federal, state, and local public health agencies and non-profit organizations providing disaster recovery services.















Tatjana Bulat, MD, CMD







Dr. Bulat is the Director of the Tampa Patient Safety Center of Inquiry (PSCI), a translational research center; Medical Director of the Falls Clinic there, and a Co-Director of the Interprofessional Fellowship Program in Patient Safety. Her research interests are in the area of falls and fall-related injury prevention in frail elderly, as well as medication management to reduce falls risk in the same population.



<p>Robert R Campbell, JD, MPH, PhD Bob's primary research interest is in tracking veterans injuries and adverse events and assisting in identifying policies, programs, and interventions that mitigate these kinds of events. Identifying patient and system-level risk factors associated with fall-related injuries and other types of adverse events that occur along the rehabilitation continuum are emphasized in his research. Cost analyses and business case development for injury and adverse event mitigation programs are also an important part of his research.</p>	
<p>Stephanie L. Carey, PhD Dr. Carey holds a PhD in Biomedical Engineering from University of South Florida. She is the research coordinator for the Motion Analysis Laboratory at the University of South Florida's Center for Assistive and Rehabilitation Robotics Technologies. She is also an instructor in the Mechanical Engineering Dept. at USF where she teaches and mentors masters and doctoral students. She is also an amputee researcher at the VISN8 Patient Safety Center of Inquiry. Her research focuses on function and compensatory motion of upper limb prostheses. In the motion analysis lab, she has also been involved in research studying lower limb prosthetic function and dancer and instrumentalist injury prevention.</p>	
<p>Paula L. Chapman, PhD Paula is a Traumatologist with emphasis on PTSD and mild traumatic brain injury. Her primary research interests are discerning why some patients recover more quickly from PTSD while others experience more enduring symptoms, and untangling the web of complexity between mTBI and PTSD with the ultimate goal of return to duty status for military patients and a better quality of life for all patients. This is achieved through a multi-disciplinarian approach consisting of the fields of neuropsychology, cognitive psychology, psychiatry, psychoneuroimmunology, physiology, biology, and traumatology and the use of survey questionnaires, neurocognitive assessments and biomarkers.</p>	
<p>Bridget A. Cotner, MA, Doctoral Candidate Ms. Corner is a Qualitative Researcher on the research study "Spinal Cord Injury Vocational Integration Program (SCI-CIP): Predictive Outcome Model Over Time for Employment (PrOMOTE). Her interests are in qualitative research methods, specifically participatory research methods.</p>	
<p>Glenn Curtiss, PhD Glenn Curtiss' research interests are in the areas of neuropsychology, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, and rehabilitation outcomes. He is currently Co-PI in a study of the effects of increased attention demands on gait and balance abilities in individuals with blast- versus nonblast-acquired traumatic brain injury. He is a coauthor on the published findings of the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center's randomized controlled trial of cognitive therapy versus functional-based therapy in the rehabilitation of moderate to severe traumatic brain injury. Additional investigations currently underway include examination of cognitive and behavioral changes associated with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and personality and behavioral factors associated with pressure ulcers in individuals with spinal cord injury.</p>	
<p>Christine Elnitsky, PhD, MSN, RN Dr. Elnitsky is a community health nurse specialist and health services researcher, who completed a post doctoral fellowship in pharmoeconomics. Dr. Elnitsky has extensive experience in health delivery systems and quality of life outcomes research. She has current work underway to evaluate innovative approaches such as integrated delivery systems for reintegrating veterans into their communities, particularly for Veterans of OEF/OIF.</p>	

<p>Dezon Finch, PhD Dr. Finch earned both his Masters and Doctorate degrees from the University of South Florida in Management Information Systems. Dr. Finch has expertise in data management, research methodology, data and text mining and information extraction. His current interests are in developing methods for extracting medically relevant information from semi-structured text in medical documents and in inferencing and modeling at the patient level using the electronic medical record.</p>	
<p>Philip R. Foulis, MD, MPH Dr. Foulis is Chief, Pathology Informatics at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital. He has developed text mining techniques for both research and clinical utility. The work in text mining has resulted in this facility becoming part of a multisite national consortium to champion text mining in the Veterans Administration. By obtaining both field-based and text information, numerous studies have provided information for more extensive studies and changing clinical practice patterns. The information enables clinicians to utilize the wealth of clinical and administrative data available in the Veterans Healthcare Administration to improve the care of our patients. He is also a pathologist with interest in the clinical utility of laboratory data, interpretation and presentation of information to clinicians.</p>	
<p>Donna J. Haiduven, PhD, RN, CIC Dr. Haiduven's research goal is the prevention of sharps injuries in healthcare workers (HCWs). To achieve this, her interest is in evaluating devices with engineered sharps injury protection (ESIP) in the laboratory setting. Her research foci include 1) evaluation of blood splatter from phlebotomy devices and intravenous catheters and 2) determination of ergonomic forces required to activate retractable syringes. Dr. Haiduven is also an Assistant Professor at the University of South Florida, teaching infection control courses.</p>	
<p>Jeffrey Harrow, MD, PhD, FACP Dr. Harrow's research interest is in improving the life of patients living with Spinal Cord Injury, including Multiple Sclerosis and ALS. His primary research goal is prevention of pressure ulcers. Related to this is monitoring of healing of pressure ulcers once they have occurred, and inventing devices to restore mobility to persons living with pressure ulcers. His other research goal is developing improved methods of communication among persons with Spinal Cord Injury and others, with adapted devices to control custom computers, including voice control, eye gaze control, and thought control.</p>	
<p>Stephanie Hart-Hughes, PT, MSMS, MCS Stephanie Hart-Hughes is a physical therapist with over 18 years of experience and a clinical board specialty in the area of neurology. She has an advanced Masters Degree in Medical Science with a concentration in Clinical Translational Research and is currently enrolled in a NIH K-30 Scholars doctoral program in advanced clinical research methods. She has served as the Director of the HSR&D/RR&D Center of Excellence Gait and Balance Laboratory for 10 years with a resulting specialty in the advanced clinical and laboratory analysis of balance and gait dysfunctions in individuals following neurological injury. Her research interests include: fall prevention, rehabilitation of gait and balance disorders and the integration of technology into clinical practice.</p>	
<p>Jolie Haun, PhD, EdS Dr. Haun's interdisciplinary approach to research focuses on health behavior and palliative interventions. Her current research at the VA is in health communication and health literacy; and psychometric development and evaluation. Dr. Haun has expertise in using mixed qualitative and quantitative methodologies in clinical research and translating outcomes into, health promotion and marketing and multi-media education strategies. Her program of research focuses on the development and evaluation of targeted interventions for veterans and their caregivers to promote empowerment and participation in individualized health care to improve health related outcomes.</p>	

<p>M. Jason Highsmith, DPT, CP, FAAOP Jason's research interests include comparative efficacy of prosthetic components and/or rehabilitative interventions for the client with amputation. Primarily, he is interested in interventions for the client with transfemoral amputation including prosthetic component design, function, evaluation and functional outcomes across arrays of abilities including activities of daily living, safety, fitness, recreation and extreme sporting activities.</p>	
<p>Inez V. Joseph, PhD, ARNP, NHA Inez is Chief Nurse Haley's Cove Community Living Center (HCCLC). Her research focus is on wandering, patient safety/falls, and caregiver stress. She supervises approximately 200 nursing personnel and coordinates an integrated program demonstrating a continuum of care, including inpatient, outpatient Geriatric Clinic, Hospice/Palliative Care Respite, Dementia and community based nursing care.</p>	
<p>William Kearns, PhD Bill received his PhD in psychology from the University of South Florida in 1989. He has served on the faculty of the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute from 1990 to the present and was recently the director of the Computer Support Center from 1992 to 2003. He joined the Department of Aging and Mental Health Disparities in October, 2003 and is an Assistant Professor. His interests include using automation to facilitate improved care for elders with dementia and using technology to improve access to mental health services and education.</p>	
<p>Jason D. Lind, PhD, MPH Jason Lind is a medical anthropologist with a wide range of experience in applied health research. His area of interest and expertise include health disparities and using qualitative methods to inform quality improvement research. Currently, Jason is a qualitative health researcher on several funded studies at the COE.</p>	
<p>James A. McCart, PhD James' research interests are in the use of text mining, data mining, and natural language processing (NLP) techniques on veterans' medical records to predict the presence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and mild traumatic brain injuries (mTBI). The practical application of this research is to develop surveillance models that would identify veterans who may benefit from additional PTSD and mTBI screenings.</p>	
<p>Dorothy Helen Moore, PhD Helen seeks to conceptually and methodologically advance the field of wandering science, in conjunction with senior scholars. Conceptually, in partnership with Professor Donna L. Algase, she originated a novel definition of wandering behavior, developed a decision-making framework that matches problematic wandering behaviors and interventions, developed a compendium of wandering terms and definitions and identified four domains circumscribing all wandering behavior. Methodologically, in partnership with Drs. William D. Kearns and James Fozard, she is pioneering the application of radio frequency identification technology to observe and precisely measure wandering behavior, specifically as it occurs within domestic home environments and in response to management interventions.</p>	

<p>Risa Nakase-Richardson, PhD Risa is a clinical neuropsychologist with 10 years experience working in TBI neurorehabilitation in both clinical and research capacities. Her primary area of interest has been early neurobehavioral recovery and outcome. Her work has lead to development of new assessment instruments for use in early neurobehavioral recovery, development and preliminary evaluation of program interventions for managing sequelae of severe brain injury, and phenomenologic studies that have helped contribute to the empirical base of understanding the diagnostic distinctions among syndromes of impaired consciousness.</p>	
<p>Lisa Ottomanelli, PhD Dr. Lisa Ottomanelli is clinical psychologist with over 15 years of clinical and research experience in the area of spinal cord injuries (SCI) and rehabilitation. Her primary area of research interest is finding effective treatment approaches to improve employment outcomes among Veterans with spinal cord injury. Dr. Ottomanelli’s work focuses on the priority area of restoring community integration among some of our most severely injured Veterans.</p>	
<p>Matthew J. Peterson, PhD Dr. Peterson earned his degree in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Florida. His area of research focuses on pressure ulcer prevention, and he has expertise with interface pressure mapping. He is part of the research team concentrating on pressure ulcer prevention, diagnosis, and management. He is currently focusing on pressure ulcer prevention at Tampa VA in persons with spinal cord injury.</p>	
<p>Sam Phillips, PhD Sam Phillips’ areas of interest include outcome measures for prosthetic and orthopedic impairments, assistive device development, and balance, clinical, and neurological measures of device performance and outcomes. Sam is currently participating in the the VA study to optimize the DEKA arm, a multidegree of freedom prosthetic arm.</p>	
<p>Patricia Quigley, PhD, MPH, ARNP, CRRN, FAANP Dr. Quigley is a nurse practitioner in adult health, a clinical nurse specialist in rehabilitation, certified in rehabilitation nursing, and a funded nurse researcher. She has expertise in patient safety, program evaluation, rehabilitation, functional independence, fall and injurious fall prevention across settings, and epidemiology.</p>	
<p>Bryce S. Sutton, PhD Bryce’s areas of interest include health economics, medical decision making, decision modeling, pharmacoconomics, and economic evaluations of diagnostic and prosthetic technologies. Bryce is currently participating in economic evaluations of the VHA Safe Patient Handling Initiative and cognitive assessments after traumatic brain injury.</p>	

Peter A Toyinbo, MBChB, PhD, CPH

Dr. Toyinbo is a biostatistician at the Tampa HSR&D/RR&D Center of Excellence (COE); he provides statistical support for various research projects at the center. His research interest is methodology, with a major focus on development of an effective model for identifying patients who are helped, unresponsive or harmed by an intervention program in a randomized field trial. This involves assessment of variation in intervention impact as a function of individual level risk or protective factors, using latent variable modeling and smooth spline function techniques.



Rodney D. Vanderploeg, PhD

Dr. Vanderploeg is a clinical neuropsychologist in the Brain Injury and Polytrauma Rehabilitation programs at the Tampa VAMC. He has his diplomate in Clinical Neuropsychology from the American Board of Professional Psychology. He has been associated with the multi-site Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center program since 1992 as a co-investigator and the Coordinator of Neuropsychology. He is Associate Professor with the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, as well as the Department of Psychology, at the University of South Florida. He serves on the editorial boards of *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*, *Applied Neuropsychology*, and *Psychological Services*. His research interests are in the areas of traumatic brain injury and polytrauma rehabilitation, clinical neuropsychology, and cognitive impairments associated with various medical conditions.



Career Development Awardees

Lee Barks, PhD, ARNP

Lee is committed to contributing to the evidence base and developing interventions for older adults who require positioning in wheelchairs and other equipment in the long term care environment. Her primary research goal is to learn how deliberate positioning of residents can produce the health outcomes of safety, breathing, eating, comfort, physical function, and quality of life. This program involves instrument development and use of technology with vulnerable populations.



Mary Elizabeth (Libbey) Bowen, PhD—RR&D Career Development Awardee

Libbey is a social gerontologist broadly interested in functional status and cognitive impairment/dementia in later life. Libbey's PhD from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University was funded, in part, by a national award from the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP). Libbey is active in the American Sociological Association and the Gerontological Society of America, Aging and the Life Course Section. Libbey comes to the Center of Excellence (COE) as a patient-safety fellow after completing her third year as a post doc at the Institute of Gerontology, Wayne State University (WSU) in Detroit, MI. At the COE she is examining the relationship between wandering and functional status among older adults with dementia. Specifically, she is interested in how wandering-related adverse events (e.g., falls, elopement, weight loss) may trigger the onset and progression of functional decline.



Fellows

Rose Fadul, MPH

Rose Fadul is currently a Patient Safety Fellow through the Veteran's Affairs Office of Academic Affiliations. Rose graduated from Florida International University with a MPH specializing in Health Policy and Management. As a graduate student, Rose was a member of Women's Healthcare Executive Network, The National Kidney Foundation and The Stempel Public Health Association. Rose is enthusiastic about her fellowship opportunity and hopes to continue a career in patient safety.



Eugene M. Golding, Jr, MD, MPH

Dr. Golding is a Patient Safety Fellow through the VA Interprofessional Fellowship Program in Patient Safety. He did his General Pediatric Residency in the Greenville (SC) System, and his Preventive Medicine Residency at the University of South Carolina. His interests are antibiotic stewardship and resistance in the hospital, EBM, and inpatient information flow.

Frances Kanach, MPH, PhD

Dr. Fran Kanach joins the VA as a Health Services Research and Development Fellow. Her research focus includes health care delivery systems' effective continuity and coordination of care strategies—their safety, quality, cost and financing implications. In the context of VA's health care system, these issues are germane and timely, especially with regard to the complex needs of patients with a long-term path of rehabilitation, for example Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Spinal Cord Injury (SCI), Amputation and Polytrauma (multiple affected systems). As a Pew Health Policy Fellow at Brandeis University's Heller School, Fran undertook a multi-disciplinary course of study in health economics, political science and sociology as they inform the policy making process.



Nisa Pistone, Major, USAF, NC

Nisa is a Patient Safety Fellow from the US Air Force. She has been an RN for 20 years and has worked in both civilian and active duty service. She has a Master's in Military Operational Art and Science from the Air Force's Air University. She has experience in critical care, long-term/rehab care, outpatient surgery, clinic management and operational compliance/quality. She will work at the Air Force Medical Operations Agency, Patient Safety Program upon completion of the fellowship.



Research Staff

- Laurel Adams-Koss, MOT, OTR/L
- Rachel Ahumada
- Nicole Antinori, MBA, BScNutr
- Lance Arney, MA
- James Barnes
- Katie Brim
- Sharon Bryant
- Luis Calle
- Jeff Craighead, PhD
- Jemy Delikat, OTR
- Lynn Dirk
- Maria Raquel Elliot, OTR
- Marsha Amoy Fraser, MA
- Yvonne Friedman, MA, OTR/L
- Deborah Gavin-Dreschnack, PhD
- Lisa Goff, PT
- Bridget Hahm, MA, MPH, CCRC
- Melanie Harris, CPO
- Amy Houston
- Varol Kayhan, PhD
- Virginia Keleher
- Michael Kerrigan, MS
- S. Angelina (Angel) Klanchar, RN, BSN, MS
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- Ryan Thurman
- John Trainor
- Keith White, MD

Program Support/Clinical Staff

- Barbara Lee Augello
- Robert Byrd
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- Sharon Gail Henderson
- Valerie Kelleher
- Melissa Longs
- Mary Reeder, BIS
- Barbara (Bonnie) Rossi, MS
- James D. Switzer, PT
- Scotty Young