

The Newsbrief

Center for Management of Complex Chronic Care VA HSR&D Center of Excellence
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Eileen Collins, PhD, RN Awarded Career Scientist in RR&D

Eileen Collins, Senior Investigator and Director of the Nurse Postdoctoral Program for CMC3 and Associate Professor at the UIC College of Nursing, has received a Research Career Scientist Award from Rehabilitation Research & Development. Dr. Collins' award began January 1, 2010 and is for five years. The designation of VA Research Career Scientist is given to senior investigators who have distinguished themselves through scientific achievement and contribution to the VA research program via training, mentoring junior scientists, functioning as a resource for the research community and collaborating with clinicians.

The central focus of Dr. Collins' research is to improve the quality of life of patients with chronic illnesses through physical activity. Her state-of-the-art laboratory serves as a central core for her research program studying the effects of physical function and physical activity. Her research has been published in esteemed journals such as the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* and *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. Dr. Collins serves as the Chair of the R&D Committee and formerly chaired the IRB Committee. She chairs the national HSR&D Data Safety Monitoring Board and serves on Scientific Review Boards for both Rehabilitation R&D and HSR&D. She was recently inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation.

Congratulations Dr. Collins!

Meet our New Assistant Director of CMC3 at Hines

Todd A. Lee PharmD, PhD has recently been named as the Assistant Director of the Center for Management of Complex Chronic Care. As part of his responsibilities as the Assistant Director, Dr. Lee will assist Dr. Weaver in the day-to-day activities associated with the CMC3 Hines site. He will also continue in his role as the director of the CMC3 PhD Post-Doctoral program. Dr. Lee has been with the Center since September of 2001. He received his PharmD degree from Drake University and his PhD from the University of Washington. In addition to his CMC3 appointment, Dr. Lee is an associate professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and has adjunct appointments in the Department of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Sleep and Allergy Medicine and the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The primary focus of his research is related to the evaluation of the comparative effectiveness of medications with interest in safety related issues (pharmacoepidemiology), costs associated

with medication use (pharmacoeconomics) and the quality of care provided. The majority of his research has been in the area of chronic respiratory disease, with a particular interest in COPD. In addition, he is currently conducting work that focuses on patient outcomes amongst those with co-occurring multiple chronic conditions and development of measures of episodes of care.

Post Doctoral Programs at CMC3

The Center for Management of Complex Chronic Care currently has three active Post doctoral fellowship programs. The oldest is the OAA/HSR&D PhD Post Doctoral Fellowship. Of those who have completed the program, many have continued their careers and become successfully funded. One example of this is Timothy Hogan, PhD who completed his fellowship in 2009 and currently has two HSR&D funded projects (see page 4).

Second is the OAA/HSR&D RN PhD Post Doctoral Fellowship. Fellows in this program have also been successful in getting HSR&D funding. Karen Saban completed her fellowship in 2010 and recently received HSR&D funding for her research in the caregiver population of TBI Veterans (see page 5).

Our third is the Post Doctoral Resident Fellowship Program. We currently have a MD post resident, Shanti Ganesh whose work is highlighted on page 6.

CMC3 is currently recruiting applications for all three Postdoctoral positions in 2011. Please go to our website http://www.cmc3.research.va.gov/Fellowship_Programs or call the Center at (708) 202-2414 for more information.

New Studies at CMC3

Title: *Focused Infection Control Reminders (FIRE): A Data Driven Approach to Antibiotic Selection"*

PI: Abel Kho, MD, **Co-PI:** Charlesnika T. Evans, PhD

Due to the increase in antibiotic resistance, inappropriate treatment of serious infections is increasing as clinicians are left with fewer antibiotic choices. Inappropriate antibiotic treatment for serious infections can double the risk of mortality. In current practice, clinicians prescribe antibiotics based on published national recommendations, and may or may not use guidance from local yearly releases of antibiogram data. Antibiograms are presented by infecting organism, and do not account for the widely differing risk factors for resistance in individual patients.

Further, few clinicians routinely reference antibiograms when prescribing antibiotics, hindered by poor integration of antibiogram data into existing workflows or the electronic medical record. Therefore, the overall aim of this two year study is to create informatics tools to track and reduce infection rates with antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The specific objectives include: 1) develop dynamic antibiotic susceptibility reports reflecting patients with similar demographics and relevant clinical risk factors; and 2) retrospectively analyze the impact tailored antibiograms have on antibiotic prescribing and outcomes for inpatients with bloodstream or urinary tract infections.

Title: *"2009 H1N1 Pandemic and Seasonal Influenza in SCI/D: Infection Control Strategies"*

PI: Sherri LaVela, PhD; **Co-I:** Frances M. Weaver, PhD; Charlesnika Evans, PhD;

Barry Goldstein, MD, PhD

The goal of this RRP is to evaluate specific approaches used to prevent/reduce influenza transmission in the SCI/D System of Care in response to the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, including assessing infection control strategies used by SCI staff and guidance provided by local infection control units. Due to the rapid spread of and uncertainties about the H1N1 virus, we will evaluate patient's beliefs, behaviors, and information seeking strategies (e.g., social media). These findings will lead to the understanding of ways to handle emergent issues, such as pandemics, in special populations.

Title: *"Effect of a Pre-clinic Phone Intervention on Symptoms, Disease Impact, and Medication Adherence in Patients with GERD Unresponsive to PPI Therapy"*

PI: John Pandolfino, MD, MS; **Co-I:** Sherri Lavela PhD

Dr. LaVela is working with colleagues at the Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University on a randomized trial of patients with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) who are not responsive to PPI therapy. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effects of a pre-clinic telephone intervention that includes recommendation of specific lifestyle modifications, counseling on proper medication administration, and modified dosing of PPI medication. We will determine if the intervention has an impact on GERD symptoms, disease impact, and medication adherence in patients unresponsive to their current GERD care.

Title: *"Managing Personal Health Information for Co-Morbid Chronic Conditions"*

PI: Timothy Hogan, PhD

The onset of multiple chronic conditions requires individuals to manage diverse kinds of health information. The expression "personal health information management" recently has been introduced in the health informatics literature to describe the range of activities that support individuals' access, integration, organization, and use of information pertaining to their own health. At present, our knowledge of personal health information management is organized predominantly around single health conditions. The challenges confronted by individuals who must manage personal health information for multiple, co-existing conditions have been largely ignored. Drawing on the strengths of qualitative methodology, the objectives of this pilot study are to 1) describe the management of personal health information among Veterans with co-morbid chronic health conditions; 2) examine the relationships between the management of personal health information and chronic disease self-management in the context of co-morbid conditions; and 3) explore the role that "Veteran-centric informatics" applications play in the management of personal health information and in the self-management activities of Veterans with co-morbid chronic conditions.

In this 2-component study, we will first conduct one-on-one, audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews and administer background questionnaires to 30 Veterans with select co-morbid chronic conditions. We will then pursue targeted follow-up work with 3 to 5 of these Veterans, including second interviews and additional semi-structured interviews with their informal caregivers and/or VA healthcare providers.

Recently, the VA identified “Veteran-centric informatics” and the care of complex, chronic health conditions as priority research areas. This pilot study represents a critical first step in an emerging research program that will enhance the capacity of Veteran-centric informatics applications to support self-management and ultimately improve health outcomes among Veterans with co-morbid chronic diseases.

Title: *“Medication Self-Management among Veterans eligible for Medicare Part D”*

PI: Kevin Stroupe, PhD

Over 40% of veterans eligible for VA healthcare are enrolled in Medicare. Starting January 1, 2006, drug coverage was available to everyone in Medicare through Medicare Part D. Medicare Part D represents a change in potential benefits available to a substantial portion of VA users, which could affect not only medication acquisition and adherence but also healthcare use. Individuals with Medicare coverage, including veterans receiving care at VA, could enroll in Medicare Part D beginning November 15, 2005. Over 25% of VA users have enrolled in the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit. Prescription medications are at the core of managing and treating chronic illnesses, and Part D may impact medication acquisition and adherence from VA and non-VA sources. To address these issues, we will conduct a nationwide survey of Veterans about enrollment in Part D, factors affecting the enrollment decision, use of non-VA medications, and medication adherence. Understanding how patients manage their prescription medication acquisition inside and outside VA is necessary for planning at the national level and for healthcare providers to devise the best treatment strategies for patients. This pilot study will validate a questionnaire that can be used to assess these issues in a national survey of Veterans.

Title: *“Stress and Inflammation in Family Caregivers of Traumatic Brain Injured Veterans”*

PI: Karen Saban, PhD, RN

Although research investigating the health of family caregivers of veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) is sparse, literature consistently indicates that, in general, family caregivers are at risk for developing depression, anxiety, altered immune function, health problems, and poor quality of life. Recent evidence demonstrates that chronic stress leads to loss of the ability of cortisol, a stress-related hormone, to attenuate stress-induced release of inflammatory cytokines. This may increase the risk for developing inflammatory –related disease. The specific aims of the Nursing Research Initiative (NRI) pilot project are to: (1) Describe the relationships among stress, physiological measures of stress (diurnal salivary cortisol) and inflammatory cytokines, physical health, psychological health, and perceived quality of life of family caregivers of TBI patients; (2) Assess recruitment strategies and feasibility of data collection methods; and (3) Collect data to calculate effect sizes of measures for future studies. A descriptive, prospective, cross-sectional, correlational methodology will be used. A convenience sample of 44 unpaid female adult family caregivers of military service members or Veterans experiencing a moderate or severe TBI within the past 1 to 6 years will be enrolled. In addition to completing a written questionnaire, participants will collect saliva samples five times a day (upon awakening, 30 minutes after awakening, 12 noon, 5 PM, and bedtime) for two consecutive days. All data will be returned to the investigator via postage-paid biohazardous compliant packaging. This study will provide new findings to help fill gaps in

knowledge of psychological stress and physiological sequelae of caregiving for individuals with TBI.

Title: *"Improving Retention in the MOVE! Group Program: A Pilot Study"*

PI: Min Woong Sohn, PhD; **Co-I:** Frances Weaver, PhD, Bonnie Spring, PhD

MOVE! is a VA-wide weight management program for helping overweight or obese veterans. One of the most serious challenges this program faces is high attrition. In 2008, 45% of the Group Program enrollees did not come back to a second session and 64% dropped out after 3 sessions. This suggests that high attrition is one of the most serious challenges that MOVE! Group Program has to solve for improving its effectiveness. The objective of this pilot study will identify program features and provider characteristics that are associated with high attrition rates. This study can eventually help the VA organize more effective MOVE! Group Programs across the country.

Someone You Should Know, Our Newest MD Post Resident Fellow

Shanti Ganesh, MD, MPH, received her MPH in epidemiology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Public Health in 2004. She received her MD at Duke University in North Carolina in 2006. She completed residency training in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago at Northwestern University in June 2010. In addition to her current duties as a Health Services Research Fellow and attending physician in PM&R at Hines VA Hospital, she is pursuing PhD level graduate studies in epidemiology at the University of Illinois at Chicago's School of Public Health.

Dr. Ganesh is interested in aging and disability. Her work has included analyses utilizing the Women's Health and Aging Study I database to examine the interactions between physical performance, self reported difficulty, and choice of adaptive strategy for mobility in elderly women, study of a cohort of Veterans' use of manual wheelchairs, and investigation of the relationship between ankle fracture and outcomes such as cost and length of stay in patients with diabetes in the National Inpatient Sample. During her residency training she also worked with the Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, using Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility-Patient Assessment Instrument Medicare data in a study examining the relationship between self reported pain and functional outcomes in elderly hip fracture patients.

She has presented multiple oral and poster presentations at national meetings and has published her findings in various peer-reviewed journals. She hopes to use her training as an HSR&D Fellow to continue her pursuit of a career in academic physiatry.

Hines Happenings

Congratulations Eileen Collins! Hines Hospital's Nursing Week Recognition and Award Program, held in late spring awarded Dr. Collins for her Expanded Role in Nursing.

Congratulations Saul Weiner! Dr. Weiner's article, Contextual errors and failures in individualizing patient care: a multicenter study in *Ann Intern Med.* 2010 Jul 20;153(2):69-75 received press coverage both on television and in the Sunday Chicago Tribune.

Congratulations Theresa Pape! Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine has approved Dr. Theresa Pape's promotion to the rank of Research Associate professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. This promotion will go into effect September 1, 2010.

Congratulations Lorrie Roth! We would like to congratulate, Lorrie Roth, BSN, RN, and her family on the recent birth of their son, Luke Roth. Ms. Roth is a student in the Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Program at Northwestern University. She recently joined CMC3 to work on a VA quality improvement collaborative under the mentorship of Dr. Sherri LaVela as part of her requirements to complete her Master's Degree.

Welcome New Employees

Waleeta Canon, MPP. Waleeta graduated from the George Washington University School of Public Policy in 2006. Before joining CMC3, she worked as a Project Manager conducting both qualitative and quantitative research on populations around the globe. Waleeta is fluent in one of the world's oldest languages, Syriac. Waleeta will be primarily working as a project manager on Sherri LaVela's Influenza study.

Deidre Murphy, RN. Deirdre graduated from Loyola University's Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing and worked for two years in the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at Hines VA Hospital. She is currently pursuing her Master's of Science in Nursing and Health Systems Management, expected graduation May 2011. She recently joined Marylou Guihan's study "Self-management to Prevent Ulcers in Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury" as the local site coordinator and will be working with the study team to help recruit patients at Hines VA Hospital.

Thea Rogers, MPH. Thea graduated from the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2010. Prior to coming to VA, she worked in the information technology industry as a help desk and desktop support analyst. Thea will be working on Marylou Guihan's pressure ulcer device study as a project manager. She also provides statistical support for other QUERI/CMC3 projects.

Lea Cloninger, PhD. Lea holds a doctorate in social work from the University of Illinois at Chicago where she worked for a number of years as a computer programmer and data analyst in the department of psychiatry. She is working with Kevin Stroupe and Bridget Smith in CMC³ and with Madeline McCarren in Pharmacy Benefits Management.

Summer Students. We would like to thank the following students who joined us for the summer months: Jacqueline Allen, Wesley Berry, Catherine Gruener, Keshonna Lones, Michael Oleksiak, Baraharak Moallem, Lauren Scimeca, Sean Tully, Jana Wingo, Monique Patton, Daniel

Cunningham, Uletta Jackson, Brittany Garlenski, Elizabeth Johnson, Sara House, Bella Etingen.
Good luck at school!

A Little Rain Did Not Dampen the CMC3 Picnic

The CMC3 picnic was a great success this year despite the menacing rain that tried to threaten it. The "theme" this year was "Roll Back the Prices", complete with smiley faces, red white and blue decorations and reduced rates for food items. One hundred twenty three employees and their guests were in attendance this year, up from last year (115). Music and a diverse three tables full of sides and desserts filled the pavilion. The games this year included a water balloon toss, and the ever popular egg toss. Young and old alike are encouraged to participate for bragging rights and prizes. Volleyball games were played throughout the picnic. Team Brand, our famous grill team, was able to start and keep the grills going despite the raindrops. Their outdoor culinary skills amazed us once again. Thanks to all who worked on the picnic to make it a success, always a great tradition of CMC3.

Recent Publications

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Editorial Credits

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