

The Newsbrief

Center for Management of Complex Chronic Care VA HSR&D Center of Excellence
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Self Management for Prevention of Pressure Ulcers in SCI Funded

Many factors increase the risk of pressure ulcers (PrUs) in SCI, making them a serious, costly, and life-long complication of SCI. Dr. Marylou Guihan and colleagues have been funded to address self management for PrUs through an HSR&D IIR. Goals for this study include: 1) helping patients and providers understand PrUs as a complex chronic illness, 2) introducing patient self-management as the best strategy for PrU prevention and 3) implementing effective, consistent, and cost-effective PrU prevention protocols into routine clinical practice within VHA.

The primary objective of this study is to determine whether a randomized trial of a multi-component self-management (SM) intervention increases the use of skin-protective behaviors and reduces skin worsening in veterans with SCI. The SM intervention consists of: 1) on-site decisional support to promote provider adherence to ulcer management guidelines, 2) enhanced, interactive PrU education, 3) chronic disease self-management skill building via telephone-based groups, 4) proactive care management using motivational interviewing to support ongoing self-management activities, and 5) distance technology. An education control intervention (ED) will control for potential effects of natural history/time, treatment dosing, measurement processes, attention, the non-specific effects of therapeutic alliance, social support, and of receiving a manualized treatment with specific therapist procedures. The ED intervention will differ only in that subjects will not be instructed in any specific problem solving, self-monitoring, or SM techniques, with the exception of encouraging them to become informed consumers of SCI care. This project focuses on improving patient behavior and making health system changes.

Pilot Study-How to Encourage Patients' Active Communication Behaviors

Howard S. Gordon, MD, a senior investigator at CMC3 and on the staff at Jesse Brown VAMC recently received funding from the HSR&D short term grant opportunity announced in early 2008. The grant will explore the factors that encourage/discourage patients to use active participatory communication behaviors in medical interactions with primary care providers.

Dr. Gordon comments that "Communication in medical interactions is critical and plays an important, but often overlooked role in health-care decision making and quality of care." Patients who use more active participatory communication behaviors with their physicians experience more favorable biomedical outcomes. Dr. Gordon points out that communication is a two way street and though improving physicians' communication behaviors is important, focusing on improving patients' communication behaviors is also important. He is focusing his research in this area because evidence indicates that this approach may be most successful at enhancing communication in physician-patient encounters.

This short term project will use focus group interviews to obtain the patient's perspective on (1) communicating with the provider in general; (2) communicating about diabetes; and (3) communicating about medication adherence. Guiding questions for the focus groups are based on the conceptual framework of communication competence.

Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award Presented to CMC3 Fellow

Timothy P. Hogan, PhD, completed his doctoral training at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In April, Tim was selected by his alma mater to receive the Berner-Nash Memorial Award, which is presented to an individual who completes an outstanding doctoral dissertation. The award was founded by students in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science over three decades ago in memory of Mr. Bill Berner and Mr. Bill Nash, two graduates who died tragically in an automobile accident.

Holding that the work involved in managing chronic illness is performed mostly beyond the confines of the health care system, Tim's dissertation was a home-based ethnographic study of the information sources and activities associated with the management of treatment for HIV-disease. His findings illustrated the ways in which different sources of health information may be prioritized by the ill, how information use can change over the course of illness and regimen, and how the management of personal health information is shaped by factors both internal and external to the individual.

Tim successfully defended his dissertation in August 2007. He accepted his award at commencement exercises on Sunday May 11, 2008.

Paul Q. Peterson Public Health Scholarship Awarded to Doctoral Student from CMC3

Sherri L. LaVela, MPH, MBA was named the Paul Q. Peterson Public Health Doctoral Scholar for 2008 at the University of Illinois, Chicago School of Public Health. This prestigious honor is awarded to outstanding doctoral students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and superior academic achievement. Recipients of this award have shown a true commitment to public health and have helped to advance the field by way of the practical application of public health delivery, (encompassing access to and management of health care delivery systems, community application of public health practice, advocacy for socially or economically disadvantaged populations, as well as epidemiological investigation and advanced biostatistical analyses).

Nine Local Initiated Projects (LIPS) Funded at CMC3 for the Summer

Nine Locally Initiated Projects (LIPs) were funded at CMC3 for completion this summer. The goal of the LIP program is to gather pilot data and test feasibility for IIRs to be submitted within the next year.

Evaluation of the Implementation of a Chest Pain Unit *Chad Kessler, MD-PI/Howard Gordon, MD Co-PI - JBVA.* "The objectives are to describe the current evaluation and management of patients seeking care within a Veterans Affairs (VA) emergency department (ED) with the chief complaint of chest pain before and after the establishment of a Chest Pain Unit (CPU) and to compare rates of hospital admissions, cardiac procedures (non-invasive and invasive), follow up care, morbidity, and mortality in the before and after groups."

An Evaluation of the Literature on Nosocomial and Latrogenic Acquisition of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV): Is it Possible in Veterans? *Charles Bennett, MD, PhD, MPP*

- PI - JBVA . "The objectives are to: 1. Evaluate the literature on nosocomial and iatrogenic acquisition of HCV; 2. Search FDA's MedWatch database for reports of nosocomial and iatrogenic infections of HCV; and 3. Interview leading VA clinicians to characterize standard practice for medication injections in the VA. It is critical to Veterans' safety that nosocomial sources of HCV infection are identified."

Evaluation of Major Depression Episode on Continuity of Care and Outcomes in COPD Patients *Todd Lee, PharmD, PhD - PI, Neil Jordan, PhD, A. Simon Pickard, PhD, Jerry Krishnan, MD, PhD Co -Investigators.* "The objective of this study is to examine changes in care patterns of patients with COPD that experience an episode of major depressive disorder. This will be accomplished by: 1) Comparing the care patterns among patients with COPD and an acute episode of major depressive disorder in the six months prior to their episode and the six months following their episode; and 2) Comparing the outcomes among patients that maintain a consistent medical home in the six months prior to and following the acute episode of major depressive disorder."

Accuracy of Diagnostic Coding of Lower Extremity Ulcer *Elly Budiman-Mak, MD - PI.* "The objective of this study is to conduct chart reviews of diabetic patients in Hines VA Hospital and determine coding and diagnostic accuracy of LE ulcer in the VHA inpatient and outpatient databases. The study is essential for the VA health system in budgetary and personnel planning for the management of LE ulcer as well as for VA researchers who use workload data to conduct research on veterans with LE ulcer."

Effect of Antibiotic Use for Acute Respiratory Infection on Health Care Utilization Outcomes in Veterans with SCI&D *Charlesnika Evans, PhD - PI.* The published literature has shown that antibiotics are frequently being used for acute respiratory infections (ARIs), which are generally not recommended for antibiotic treatment and that broad-spectrum antibiotic use is on the rise. However, there are no studies reporting on the impact of antibiotic use for ARIs in persons with spinal cord injury and disorder (SCI&D). The objective of this LIP is to assess the association between antibiotic use for ARI and patient utilization outcomes in veterans with SCI&D.

MOVE!-MD System to Mobilize VA Obesity Treatment *Bonnie Spring, PhD -PI/E. Amy Janke, PhD, Post Doctoral Fellow-Co-PI* To develop and pilot a computerized expert system to improve physician performance of evidence-based obesity management in VA primary care. Using innovative computer technology, the proposed expert system will provide an individualized, one-page report and tailored recommendations. The system is planned to increase primary care physician discussion of weight loss and increase referrals to the MOVE! program.

Measuring the Economic Costs of Contextual Errors *Saul Weiner, MD - PI - JBVA.* "Having identified errors resulting from failures to address patient context, a next step is to measure the direct and indirect costs of these errors so that potential VA interventions to prevent them can be designed and implemented in a cost-effective manner. By establishing the financial impact of several types of contextual errors, this study will provide essential data for prioritizing interventions and for justifying their costs."

Exploring Alternative Indicators of Continuity of Care: Provider and Patient Perceptions *Timothy Hogan, PhD/Post Doctoral Fellow - PI, Kevin Stroupe, PhD, Bridget Smith, PhD Co-Investigators.* "This investigation will use qualitative approaches to explore alternative indicators of continuity that might be derived from the experiences of VA healthcare providers and patients. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to 1) document the conditions associated with fragmented, uncoordinated care in VA and those that contribute to continuity during the course of care; and 2) understand the most salient aspects of continuity in the context of VA."

The Families of Traumatic Brain Injured Soldiers: Experience of Caregiving and Identification of Needs *Karen Saban, PhD, RN/Post Doctoral Nursing Fellow; Theresa Pape, DrPH, MA; Nancy S. Hogan, PhD, RN, FAA; Timothy Hogan, PhD; Ann Guernon, MA; Cheryl Odle, MBA Co Investigators.* "The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of family caregivers of veterans who have experienced a moderate to severe traumatic brain injury and to identify appropriate measurement instruments to use in future studies."

Research Day a Big Success

Hines VA Hospital Research Service celebrated Research Week with "Research Day" on May 14, 2008. Posters lined the hallways in four corridors of Building One. Merry Ward, MS, PhD from HSR&D Central Office (CO) was the CO Research Representative. The theme, "Promise for a Brighter Future" was reflected in the presentations that kicked off the event. Joanne Starzec, The CARES Foundation President, set the agenda with a short visualization exercise on the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Experience and Research. Dr. Ellen Andrews presented work on functional recovery after stroke from Dr. Kartje's laboratory.

Concluding the oral presentations was our own [Theresa Pape, DrPH, MA](#) presenting her HSR&D and RR&D studies on prediction of coma recovery in TBI.

The poster presentation competition followed. The first place poster, "A New Method for Measuring the Activity of Numerous Genes as They Relate to Nerve Injury" was presented by Tom Alexander / Kathy Jones (PI).

The second place prize was awarded to [Theresa Pape](#), presenter / (PI) on "Improved Predictions on Return to Consciousness within Year One of Severe Traumatic Brain Injury."

Third place was awarded to Akie Matsumura / Howard Greisler (PI) for their poster, "Angiogenic Interactions Between Endothelial Cell Aggregates in Response to GF-1 and VEGF in 3-D Fibrin Hydrogel Matrices".

The research hallway filled with people for the poster presentations. CMC3 staff presented many facets of Complex Chronic Care, including: best medical therapy vs. deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's disease (Weaver); recovery from TBI (Pape); prostate cancer and medication safety (Bennett); pressure ulcer management in SCI (Guihan); evaluation of data approaches in QUERI implementation and veterans' access to Medicare and VA health care (Hynes); obesity and Charcot foot in diabetics (Budiman-Mak); contributing causes of death for veterans with SCI&D (Smith); characteristics and needs of OEF/OIF veterans with SCI (Evans); *C difficile* (Parada); weight change and mortality in veterans with diabetes (Sohn); costs of pre-dialysis nephrology care and outcomes after dialysis in veterans with chronic kidney disease (Stroupe); pre-dialysis nephrology care and dialysis related health outcomes (Fischer); health related quality of life and chronic renal failure (Saban); computer games helping patients with COPD (Collins); and work on the practices of providers and SCI veterans in response to natural disasters (Hogan). If you'd like additional information from any of the above presenters, please e mail madeline.thornton@va.gov.

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