

The Newsbrief

Center for Management of Complex Chronic Care VA HSR&D Center of Excellence
Winter 2010, Vol. XVI No. 1

New Studies Starting

Use of a biophysical device to detect pressure ulcers in SCI

Marylou Guihan, PhD (PI)

Persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) are at high risk for pressure ulcers (PrUs) throughout their lifetime due to decreased mobility and lack of sensation coupled with other physiologic changes. High prevalence and recurrence, and costs associated with PrUs demonstrate the need for a practical method of early detection. A pilot study conducted with older nursing home residents demonstrated that a hand-held device that measures sub-epidermal moisture (SEM) identified and detected erythema and stage I PrUs at the sacrum and buttocks locations. Similar results in SCI would facilitate early detection and intervention and may prevent serious PrUs.

The study will be conducted at two sites, Hines, IL and Long Beach, CA. The expected enrollment is 100, 50 at each site.

Systems Redesign VHA Primary Care Telephone Collaborative

Sherri L. LaVela, PhD, MPH, MBA (PI)
Frances M. Weaver, PhD (Co-Investigator)

Drs. LaVela and Weaver have recently partnered with the VHA Systems Redesign Office on the Primary Care Telephone Access Collaborative. In VHA, emphasis has been placed on the transition to methods of care delivery other than traditional provider-patient face-to-face visits. Telephone medicine has been identified as an ideal way to meet patient's needs; provided that telephone access is adequate and successful and timely contact is achieved. Primary care facilities are often unable to meet telephone call demand, which may result in delayed care receipt, inattention to urgent care needs, and avoidable hospitalizations. As part of ongoing national efforts to provide the highest quality of care to Veterans across the entire system of care, this project is intended to improve Veteran telephone access to primary health care.

Several quality improvement strategies will be tried and tested at 18 nationwide VA primary care facilities. Data will be collected from each facility, to understand improvement strategies used and facility-level details. In addition, measures (e.g., speed of response, abandonment rates) gathered from ACD reports will be compared pre- and post-collaborative. To capture the "Voice of the Veteran" regarding their primary care telephone experiences, interviews will be conducted with primary care users. Comparisons will be made before and after improvement strategies have been implemented.

Project Title: Depression Care Facility-Level Variation for Persons with Multimorbidity

PI: Neil Jordan, PhD

Inadequate rates of concordance with VA guidelines for antidepressant treatment among depression patients seen in primary care settings are the norm, and the problem is even more pronounced for

depression patients with coexisting chronic conditions (depression-multiple chronic conditions [MCC]) because the competing demands model suggests that coexisting conditions compete with depression for attention during primary care visits. The objective of Dr. Jordan's study is to determine what facility and patient characteristics distinguish VA facilities that perform well in providing evidence-based depression care for persons with depression-MCC from VA facilities that are less successful. This 2-year study was funded by VA HSR&D and will begin soon.

Project Title: Cost Effectiveness of Deep Brain Stimulation for Parkinson's Disease

PI: Frances M. Weaver, PhD, Co-PI Kevin Stroupe, PhD

This study will examine costs and effectiveness of deep brain stimulation (DBS) for Parkinson's disease (PD). DBS is an accepted surgical alternative for symptom management for PD patients who suffer from the long-term complications of medication treatment, including motor fluctuations and severe dyskinesias. Stimulation of the subthalamic nucleus (STN) and the internal globus pallidum (GPi) regions of the brain have been shown to be efficacious targets in relieving motor symptoms. However, choice of surgical target may impact other outcomes including costs of care and health-related quality of life. This study will capitalize on a multi-site randomized trial of PD surgery (CSP #468) to gather additional information needed to assess cost-effectiveness of DBS by surgical target for persons with advanced PD. Total health care costs and disease-specific quality of life will be compared for patients randomized to receive STN vs. GPi DBS. Results of this study may aid decision makers to determine the appropriate role of DBS in treating patients with PD.

Project Title: Effects of Yoga Therapy in Veterans with PTSD: A Pilot Study

PI: Youngsook Park, MD, Co-Investigators: Vijaya K. Patil, MD, Sherri L. LaVela, PhD, MPH, MBA, Min-Woong Sohn PhD

Drs. LaVela and Sohn are Co-Investigators on Dr. Park's recently funded study to examine the effects of yoga therapy on sleep and quality of life outcomes in Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Sleep disturbances have been reported by 70 – 91% of persons with PTSD. This pilot study is a prospective, randomized controlled trial that uses multiple subjective and objective measures to assess symptoms (e.g., total sleep time, nightmares, flashbacks, etc.) and quality of life in Veterans with PTSD. The long-term goal of this research is to conduct a multi-site clinical trial to determine the efficacy of yoga therapy for patients diagnosed with PTSD and chronic sleep disturbances and to examine the feasibility of implementing this therapy throughout the VA.

Project Title: CONCERT-Clinical Effectiveness Research (CONCERT-CER) GO

Contact PI: Jerry Krishnan: Co-PI: Todd A. Lee

Todd A. Lee, PharmD, PhD, is a co-PI of a recently funded Grand Opportunity (GO) grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant was awarded to the COPD Outcomes-based Network for Clinical Effectiveness and Research Translation (CONCERT), which is a consortium of investigators at 6 US medical centers and a data coordinating center (<http://www.kpchr.org/concert/>). The CONCERT-Clinical Effectiveness Research (CONCERT-CER) GO grant will allow for the development of the research infrastructure necessary for CONCERT to conduct timely and meaningful comparative effectiveness research (CER) for patients with COPD. The objectives of the grant are to develop the data infrastructure necessary to create a cross-site data warehouse, to recruit a sample of COPD patients to enrich the data available on these patients and to develop COPD CER protocols that address key areas in COPD and leverage the capacity of the data warehouse.

Loyola University's New Program in HSR Led by Dr. Fran Weaver

Loyola University Health System announced on January 5th the launch of a new program in Health Services Research. Dr. Fran Weaver, Director of CMC3 at Hines has been named the program's director. Dr. Weaver joined Loyola as a professor in the Department of Medicine, in December 2009. Three other CMC3 investigators will also have joint appointments with the program in Health Services Research at Loyola. Kevin Stroupe, PhD, a health economist also has an appointment as associate professor in the Department Medicine; Bridget Smith, PhD, who's expertise is in research methodology and health policy, and Timothy Hogan, PhD, whose research interests include consumer health informatics, have been appointed as assistant professors in the School of Medicine and will be part of the Program in Health Services Research.

Our Newest RN Post Doc Fellow

Carol T. Kostovich, RN, PhD, is a post-doctoral nursing fellow for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Her fellowship mentors are Dr. Eileen Collins and Dr. Lee Schmidt (Loyola University Chicago). Dr. Kostovich's research focuses on the phenomenon of nursing presence and its related outcomes. Her dissertation work involved the development and psychometric assessment of the Presence of Nursing Scale (PONS), an instrument used to measure acutely ill hospitalized patients' perceptions of nursing presence. Dr. Kostovich found that patients' perceptions of nursing presence were positively correlated with perceived patient satisfaction. Psychometric assessment of the scale revealed it to be reliable and valid in this sample. During her fellowship, Dr. Kostovich will establish the dimensions of nursing presence in the veteran population, establish the psychometric properties of the PONS in a chronically ill Veteran population, and determine the relationship between nursing presence and patient, nurse, and organizational outcomes.

Dr. Kostovich is a tenured associate professor of nursing at Saint Xavier University, Chicago, Illinois. She teaches courses in both the undergraduate and graduate program, specializing in medical-surgical nursing, nursing research, and nursing education. She has practiced as a registered nurse for over 26 years. Dr. Kostovich has held positions as staff nurse and preceptor on a medical oncology unit, supervisor of a gastrointestinal medical-surgical unit and nurse educator for medical-surgical services.

Dr. Kostovich earned her bachelor of science in nursing degree from Saint Xavier College, Chicago, her master of science in nursing degree from Governors State University, University Park, Illinois, and her doctor of philosophy degree from Loyola University Chicago.

New Appointments at UIC

Dr. Saul J. Weiner, Deputy Director of CMC3 and Associate Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), has been appointed Interim Senior Associate Dean of Academic and Education Affairs in the UIC College of Medicine (COM). The COM is the largest in the nation, with four campuses in Chicago, Urbana, Rockford and Peoria. The Senior Associate Dean also serves as the Chief Academic Officer of the College and oversees undergraduate, graduate and continuing medical education activities. Dr. Weiner conducts medical education research including a currently VA funded randomized controlled medical education intervention outcomes study designed to assess the impact of a medical decision making seminar on both residents' clinical performance in the care of their patient and on patient outcomes. Dr. Weiner has also published on methods for tracking the learning impact of continuing medical education. He is interested in applying medical education research and best practices to curricular reform to enhance problem based learning and simulation in physician education.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Marian Fitzgibbon, Associate Director, CMC3 at JBVAMC who was appointed Associate Director of the Cancer Center's Cancer Control and Population Science Program at UIC. The Cancer Center will benefit greatly from her advice and leadership.

Recent Publications

1. Damush TM, Jackson GL, Powers BJ, Bosworth HB, Cheng E, Anderson J, **Guihan M, LaVela S**, Rajan S, Plue L. Implementing evidence-based patient self-management programs in the Veterans Health Administration: perspectives on delivery system design considerations. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 2010 Jan 1; 25 Suppl 1:68-71.
2. Feinglass J, **Sohn MW**, Rodriguez H, Martin GJ, Pearce WH. Perioperative outcomes and amputation-free survival after lower extremity bypass surgery in California hospitals, 1996-1999, with follow-up through 2004. *Journal of Vascular Surgery*. 2009 Oct 1; 50(4):776-783.e1.
3. **Fischer MJ**, Wyatt CM, Gordon K, Gibert CL, Brown ST, Rimland D, Rodriguez-Barradas MC, Justice AC, Parikh CR, VACS Project Team. Hepatitis C and the risk of kidney disease and mortality in veterans with HIV. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*. 2010 Feb 1; 53(2):222-6.
4. **Hynes DM, Weddle T**, Smith N, **Whittier E**, Atkins D, Francis J. Use of health information technology to advance evidence-based care: lessons from the VA QUERI Program. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 2010 Jan 1; 25 Suppl 1:44-9.
5. Nazi KM, **Hogan TP**, Wagner TH, McInnes DK, **Smith BM**, Haggstrom D, Chumbler NR, Gifford AL, Charters KG, Saleem JJ, Weingardt KR, Fischetti LF, **Weaver FM**. Embracing a health services research perspective on personal health records: lessons learned from the VA My HealtheVet system. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 2010 Jan 1; 25 Suppl 1:62-7.
6. Nielsen R, Johannessen A, Benediktsdottir B, Gislason T, Buist AS, Gulsvik A, Sullivan SD, **Lee TA**. Present and future costs of COPD in Iceland and Norway: results from the BOLD study. *European Respiratory Journal*. 2009 Oct 1; 34(4):850-7.
7. Ogale SS, **Lee TA**, Au DH, Boudreau DM, Sullivan SD. Cardiovascular events associated with ipratropium bromide in COPD. *Chest*. 2010 Jan 1; 137(1):13-9.
8. Rintamaki LS, **Weaver FM**, Elbaum PL, Klama EN, **Miskevics SA**. Persistence of Traumatic Memories in World War II Prisoners of War. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*. 2009 Dec 1; 57(12):2257-62.
9. **Sohn MW**, Stuck RM, Pinzur M, **Lee TA, Budiman-Mak E**. Lower-extremity amputation risk after charcot arthropathy and diabetic foot ulcer. *Diabetes Care*. 2010 Jan 1; 33(1):98-100.
10. Wilke CT, Pickard AS, Walton SM, Moock J, Kohlmann T, **Lee TA**. Statistical implications of utility weighted and equally weighted HRQL measures: an empirical study. *Health Economics*. 2010 Jan 1; 19(1):101-10.

Editorial Credits

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR- Frances Weaver, PhD
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT- Carol Durczak

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR- Saul J. Weiner, MD
DESIGN/LAYOUT- Madeline Thornton