The Newsbrief

Center for Management of Complex Chronic Care VA HSR&D Center of Excellence
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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.
Our New Post-Doc Fellows

**Erica Bauer, PhD**, graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2010. Her degree is in communication with an emphasis in health communication. She received a pre-doctoral NIMH grant for her dissertation titled *HIV and AIDS, Disclosure, Stigma, and Social Support within Church Communities*.

Dr. Bauer is interested in stigma communication in relation to health. Specifically, she intends to examine the relationship between stigma, disclosure, and blame. She also is interested in social support as it relates to spirituality and religion. Her past research has explored issues of mental health, homelessness, and HIV and AIDS. Currently, she is developing a project to examine the function of chaplains within the VA, the role of religion and spirituality in Veteran mental health care, as well as chaplain communication patterns in providing support to Veterans with mental health issues.

The goal of her research is to extend what is known about stigma communication and its impact on health outcomes. She also would like to develop communication interventions and resources designed to eliminate stigma communication to increase access to resources for people affected by stigmatized conditions. She hopes to develop this area of research so that stigma is no longer a barrier for individuals seeking care for medical conditions.

**Amy A. Herrold, PhD**, received her PhD in neuroscience from Loyola University Chicago in 2010. Her graduate work focused on the glutamate neurotransmitter system and its involvement with methamphetamine addiction and schizophrenia in rodent models of these co-morbid disorders. She was also a member of the Center for Compulsive Behavior and Addiction (CCBA) directed by her advisor T. Celeste Napier, Ph.D. Through the Division of Addiction Recovery and Mental Health of the CCBA, Dr. Herrold gained an interest in clinical issues and treatment interventions such as transcranial magnetic stimulation in the field of mental health.

Dr. Herrold is parlaying her interests in substance abuse and other mental health issues to the field of traumatic brain injury (TBI). As such she will be working with Dr. Theresa Pape as her primary mentor in her Ph.D. Post-doctoral Fellowship. She hopes to develop a project assessing patient outcomes related to alcohol use and dependence in the veteran TBI patient population. She is very enthusiastic about participating in a collaborative research environment that encompasses many scientific disciplines.

Dr. Herrold has presented her work at multiple national and international scientific meetings. She has also published her work in peer-reviewed scientific journals, with other manuscripts and a book chapter in the review and preparation stages. She will use this experience in HSR&D research to continue her career path in translational research in mental health.

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


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