



CINDRR Circular

Center of Innovation on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

VA Health Services Research & Development

North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Gainesville FL
James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa FL

August 2014



CINDRR investigators, Dr. Besterman-Dahan and Dillahunt-Aspillaga with Miranda Ray, Dianne Duncan, and Frank De Lucia at the renovation of ABILHouse, a St. Petersburg community reintegration facility for Veterans with TBI.

Community reintegration is a function of a person's abilities and the environment in which he or she lives.

Community Reintegration Research at CINDRR

One of CINDRR's three focus areas is Community reintegration (CR)—helping Veterans return to participation in life roles following discharge from the military or acute rehabilitation, such as family roles, work, recreation, or other meaningful activities. CR, a well-accepted patient-centric outcome in rehabilitation, is an adaptation process that is multidimensional, dynamic, personal, social and cultural. Research on CR for Veterans with disabilities is critical to inform the delivery of rehabilitation, health and social services.

CINDRR investigators interested in CR meet regularly to develop proposals, share information about CR research, and discuss emerging issues in CR research. Topics include supported employment for Veterans with spinal cord injury, reintegration needs and self care management of Veterans across all severities of traumatic brain injury, family caregiving of older adults,

and telerehabilitation to help older adults and those in rural areas continue with their rehabilitation while living at home.

The importance of CR research was recently highlighted in a guest editorial for the *Journal of Rehabilitation Research & Development* by CINDRR investigators Theresa Crocker, Gail Powell-Cope, Lisa M. Brown & Karen Besterman-Dahan (Toward a Veteran-Centric View on Community (Re) Integration, <http://www.rehab.research.va.gov/jour/2014/513/pdf/jrrd-2014-01-0011.pdf>). The editorial provides a comprehensive review of the CR literature, the current state of CR research in OEF/OIF/OND Veterans and servicemembers, and a discussion of the advances in defining and measuring CR, stakeholder response, emerging needs, and future challenges.

QUERI Connected Health Program

As the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) forges ahead to provide premier Veteran-centered health care, self-care management and electronic health technologies are at the helm of transformative initiatives. Technologies such as My HealtheVet (VA's online personal health record), mobile health, telehealth, and stand-alone kiosks provide Veterans access to care, anytime and anywhere. Operational partners and researchers are working together to understand how to best deliver technology systems to improve patient care. CINDRR investigator Jolie Haun PhD, EdS, is contributing to these efforts by leveraging collaborations with the HSR&D eHealth QUERI (Director Thomas K. Houston MD, MPH), the My HealtheVet program (Director Theresa Hancock) and the Connected Health program (Co-Directors Kathleen L. Frisbee PhD, MPH and Neil C. Evans MD) within the Office of Informatics and Analytics.

Dr. Haun's previous research evaluating Veterans experiences using Secure Messaging is published in the international *Journal of Medical Internet Research* (<http://www.jmir.org/2014/3/e75/>). Her current project evaluating Veterans preferences and needs for using VA's technology resources was inspired by her work with the eHealth QUERI during the formation of the new Connected Health program. Dr. Haun's participatory research combines the Veteran perspective with input from operational and clinical experts to create a comprehensive understanding of how electronic technology can improve services to Veterans, increase access and continuity, and promote patient empowerment. Partnerships among HSR&D eHealth QUERI, My HealtheVet and the Connected Health program support researchers such as Dr. Haun in finding innovative ways to build a vision for the future that relies on rigorous research and evaluation, and values the voice of Veterans.



Jolie Haun, PhD, EdS

Director: William Mann, OTR, PhD

Tampa Co-Directors: Gail Powell-Cope, PhD, ARNP, FAAN and Steven Scott, DO

Gainesville Co-Directors: Diane Cowper Ripley, PhD and Charles Levy, MD

Newsletter Editor: Virginia Hessels

Meet the CINDRR Co-Director, Tampa: Gail Powell-Cope

Gail Powell-Cope, PhD, ARNP, FAAN, is the Tampa Co-Director of CINDRR and the Section Chief of Rehabilitation Outcomes, R&D Service, at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital. She holds adjunct faculty appointments in the Colleges of Nursing and Public Health at the University of South Florida.

What do you like most about your work? The three best things about my work are conducting research in a practice/healthcare setting, serving Veterans, and working with an incredibly talented group of researchers, interdisciplinary clinical staff and administrative and

support staff at CINDRR. I am grateful for the opportunities I have to work with researchers at other VA research centers and with leaders in VA Central Office. I also very much enjoy my mentoring role so that I can give back to the people who have mentored me.

Who has been influential in your professional development? First would be my family who has influenced who I am and who keep me grounded on a daily basis. I have been married for 27 years to a wonderful man, and have two exceptional adult sons (non-partnered, no grandkids yet). My mom has always been my role

model and continues in that role to this day. She is my hero for how to age gracefully with style and dignity. Research mentors were Janet Flesch Hazlet (my first nurse manager), Marjorie White (University of Florida), two professors from the University of Washington, Marie Annette Brown and Jeanne Benoliel, and Audrey Nelson from the VA.

What do you do in your down-time? I am a big Tampa Bay Rays fan, and I enjoy attending ball games. When I travel I also like to visit home fields. I like to spend time with family and friends—meals, get-togethers, rock concerts, music. (Neil Young



is my favorite musician.) I love hosting an annual Christmas party for my extended family. I am in a book club with a great group of women. Our last book was, *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats*. I like to be active (swimming, bicycling, gardening), although I never seem to find the time for enough activity!

Research In Progress

Utilizing the RESCUE Stroke Caregiver Website to Enhance Discharge Planning (HSR&D IIR 11-343, Connie Uphold, Principal Investigator)

Caregiver depression is common following a family member's stroke and contributes to a survivor's hospital readmission and institutionalization. Researchers have found that interventions to help caregivers resolve problems are effective in reducing depressive symptoms, but they have been underused because implementation requires large amounts of staff time and involves multiple in-person or telephone sessions. To overcome these barriers,

the long-term goal of this program of research is to implement stroke caregiver programs that use low-cost, sustainable interventions. The immediate goal of the current project is to test, using a randomized controlled trial, a problem-solving intervention for stroke caregivers that can be delivered during the Veterans' inpatient stays followed by online, in-home sessions. Investigators modified a problem-solving intervention by adding web-based training (www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue) and on-line skills training. Recruitment is scheduled to begin in Gainesville, Miami, and Tampa in October 2014.

Noteworthy Publications

An upcoming issue of *Annals of Anthropological Practice*, written and guest edited entirely by VA anthropologists, is scheduled for publication this summer. Karen Besterman-Dahan edited the issue, and five of the articles were written by 14 CINDRR authors including Karen Besterman-Dahan, Jason Lind, Margeaux Chavez, Bridget Cotner, Bridget Hahm, Jennie Keleher, Danielle O'Connor, John Trainor, Lisa Ottomanelli, Jolie Haun, Theresa Crocker, Marsha Fraser, Jeff Harrow, and Gail Powell-Cope. Of note, while most of the authors are anthropologists, the team also represents medicine, nursing, public health, and psychology. See <http://www.research.va.gov/currents/spring2014/spring2014-39.cfm> for an overview.

Cowper Ripley DC, Litt ER, Jia H, Vogel WB, Wilson LK, Phipps MS, Harnar J, Graham GD, Using GIS to Plan Specialty Health Services for Veterans: The Example of Acute Stroke Care, *Journal of GIS*, 2014 Jun 1; 6(3): 177-184. Noted in VA HSR&D News, June 2014, HSR&D in Professional Literature.

Innovative Technology in Rehabilitation, a Special Issue, *The Scientific World Journal*, to be published May 2015, features Lead Guest Editor, Huanguang Jia, CINDRR, Guest Editors, Sean C. McCoy, CINDRR, Neale R. Chumbler, University of Georgia, Guoqing Chen, University of Kansas School of Medicine, and Albert C. Lo, Providence VA Medical Center, Center for Neurorestoration and Neurotechnology. The Call for Papers is at <http://www.hindawi.com/journals/tswj/si/370638/cfp/>

Gainesville Mentorship Highlight—Leigh A. Lehman, Ph.D.

Dr. Leigh Lehman joined CINDRR, Gainesville FL site, as an early career investigator in July 2013.

Dr. Lehman received her Master's degree in occupational therapy and her doctorate in rehabilitation science from the University of Florida. She currently works at CINDRR as a researcher and is a lecturer in the OT department, University of Florida. Her research interests include

assessment development, outcome measurement and psychometric evaluation of assessments, including evaluating assessment validity.

Her publications include evaluating responsiveness and item analysis, specifically Rasch analysis, of scales appraising upper extremity function. She has published articles in the *Journal of Hand Therapy*, *American Journal of OT*, and *Disability and Rehabilitation*.

She obtained grant funding for her dissertation work through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Dr. Lehman has extensive experience in the development and validation of assessments. Three studies led by Dr. Lehman, funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, investigated the psychometrics of the Disabilities of Arm, Shoulder, and Hand (DASH) questionnaire, a widely used instrument in

upper extremity rehabilitation. She is currently working on a grant application that involves testing the validity of cognitive tasks in a virtual grocery store.



CINDRR PARTNER ACTIVITIES: Evaluation of ORH Pilot Projects under Public Law 111-163

Recently, PL 111-163, Section 506 called for the VA to fund 5 pilot sites that would 1) increase coordination of community, local, state, and federal providers of health care and benefits to assist Veterans with community reintegration; 2) increase availability of high quality medical and mental health services; 3) enhance family adjustment benefits for transitioning Veterans; and, 4) provide outreach to Veterans and their families to inform them about the availability of benefits and to connect them with appropriate services. The Office of Rural Health (ORH) is spearheading the oversight and implementation of the pilot projects and requested that CINDRR provide assistance with the program evaluation. Staff members from both CINDRR sites (Gainesville and Tampa), led by Diane Cowper Ripley, are participating on the evaluation team.

The evaluation uses mixed methods (focus groups, interviews, analysis of secondary data) to examine organizational and individual process indicators and outcomes, barriers to implementation, promising practices, and unintended consequences. Data will be collected quarterly by each pilot site awardee. De-identified will be shared with the program evaluation team and the ORH. Data will be monitored to ensure that the program is being implemented as intended and will be analyzed using statistical methods tailored to each PL 111-163 goal.

Recent Awards

2013 Mitchell Rosenthal Award Winners

John Whyte, Risa Nakase-Richardson, Flora Hammond, Joseph Giacino with award.



Awarded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) TBI Model System Programs for "Best Scientific Publication" using the NIDRR-funded TBI Model System National Database., the Mitchell Rosenthal Award is given to papers from 2013. Fourteen papers representing NIDRR funded TBI Model System Programs, were reviewed. The award was named after Mitchell Rosenthal, Ph.D. who was involved in the very early stages of development and longitudinal funding of the TBI Model Systems since inception, almost 25 years ago. The NIDRR-funded TBI Model System has enrolled approximately 13,000 persons with TBI who are followed throughout the years of their recovery; the VA-funded TBI Model System has enrolled over 500 Veterans and service members with TBI.

This paper, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0003999313004061>, was published in an issue devoted to persons with Disorders of Consciousness (DOC) published in the October 2013 issue of *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*. The article highlights the percentage admitted to inpatient rehabilitation with an inability to follow commands (denoting severe neurologic dysfunction) who subsequently were able to regain independence in functional activities as measured by the FIM at 1, 2, and 5 years post-injury. Findings document that patients improve long after severe TBI and prolonged DOC.

CENTER OF INNOVATION ON DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH (CINDRR)

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CINDRR is a multi-institutional research center at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (Gainesville, FL) and the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital and Clinics (Tampa, FL). Scientists at this Veterans Health Administration Center of Innovation conduct research to develop strategies to improve—for Veterans of all ages—inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services and long-term management of disability, including issues that impact family members.

www.hsrp.research.va.gov/centers/cidrr8.cfm

Upcoming Conference

***Safe Patient Handling and Mobility—Transforming Clinical Practice
With a Specialty Track on Fall and Fall Injury Prevention
April 20-24, 2015, Renaissance Glendale, Glendale, AZ***

*Sponsored by Tampa VA Research and Education Foundation, Inc.
<http://www.tampavaref.org/conferences.htm>*

Gainesville Administrative Team



From the left: Lynn Jernigan, Nick Bartolomeo, Kim Rumping, Liddy Matheny

Our Gainesville administrative team is an essential part of CINDRR. Without this amazing team we would not be able to conduct the business of research.

Coordinating human resources, finances, time keeping, building management, publication & presentation management, communications & meetings, contracting, information technology, this group makes sure that we have the resources we need to provide exceptional and strategic research support for CINDRR investigators and Veterans.

Our hats are off to you.
Thank you for all you do!



This is a portion of a quilt that was made by University of South Florida honors students to honor Veterans. The quilt is displayed at CINDRR, Tampa.