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Upcoming Conferences

February 2-4, 2005
American Stroke Association, **International Stroke Conferences**, New Orleans, LA

February 11, 2005
RORC, **Investigators Meeting**, Gainesville, FL

February 16-18, 2005
HSR&D National Meeting: Improving Care for Veterans with Chronic Illnesses, Washington, DC

February 21-26, 2005
American Health Quality Association, **2005 Annual Meeting and Technical Conference**, San Francisco, CA

February 28, 2005
Stroke QUERI Executive Committee, Tampa, FL

May 14-16, 2005
American Heart Association, **6th Scientific Forum on Quality of Care and Outcomes Research in Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke**, Washington, DC

June 26-28, 2005
Academy Health Annual Research Meeting, Boston, MA

RORC ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR ARRIVES

After an extensive search over the past two years, the Director and staff of the Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center in Gainesville, Florida are pleased to announce that Rebecca J. Beyth, MD joined our Center as the Associate Director in January, 2005.

Dr. Beyth received her Bachelor of Arts *magna cum laude* from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Her Doctor of Medicine was completed at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dr. Beyth also received a Master of Science in Biostatistics from the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. She completed her Medical Internship and Residency at Michigan State University Associated Hospitals in East Lansing.



Rebecca J. Beyth, MD

Prior to coming to Gainesville, Dr. Beyth was an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, where she was also the Associate Director for Translational Research at the VA HSR&D Center for Quality of Care and Utilization Studies and Staff Physician, General Medicine, Houston Veterans Affairs Medical Center. She is the recipient of a National Institute on Aging (NIA) Career Development Award on improving the use of anticoagulant therapy in older patients, and a VA Advanced Career Development Award for improving decision making in stroke prevention.

In addition to her new role as the RORC Associate Director, Dr. Beyth is an Associate Professor of Medicine, Geriatrics Division in the College of Medicine and an Affiliate Associate Professor of Health Services Management and Policy in the College of Public Health and Health Professions at the University of Florida, as well as a Staff Physician at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center.

Dr. Beyth's research interests include improving outcomes for patients with chronic diseases and patient-physician interactions in clinical decision-making. Her interest in anticoagulant therapy for stroke prevention is a natural fit with both the research program at the RORC and also the Stroke QUERI, where she will play an important role. Dr. Beyth has published in numerous peer-reviewed journals. Some of her recent publications include:

Braun UK., Rabeneck L, McCullough LB., Urbauer DL., Wray NP., Lairson DR, **Beyth R J** (2005). Decreasing use of percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy tube feeding for veterans with dementia - racial differences remain. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 53 (2), 242-248.

Beyth RJ. Patient self-management of anticoagulation: an idea whose time has come. *Ann Intern Med.* 2005 Jan 4;142(1):73-74.

Collins TC, Soucek J, **Beyth RJ.** Benefits of antithrombotic therapy after infrainguinal bypass grafting: a meta-analysis. *Am J Med* 2004;117(2):93-99.

Levine MN, Raskob G, **Beyth RJ,** Kearon C, and Shulman S. Hemorrhagic complications of anticoagulant therapy: The Seventh ACCP Conference on Antithrombotic and Thrombolytic Therapy. *Chest* 2004; 126:311S-337S.

Beyth RJ. Quality of life issues in patients on oral anticoagulants. *Seminars in Vascular Medicine* 2003; 3(3): 239-241.

RORC WELCOMES NEW STAFF

INVESTIGATORS

[Elena M. Andresen](#) has joined the RORC on a 5/8 appointment as a Research Health Scientist at the Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center, and also holds an appointment as Professor and Chief, Epidemiology Division, in the new public health program at the University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions. Dr. Andresen Elena received her PhD in Epidemiology in 1991 at the University of Washington, Seattle, with joint training in the Doctoral Opportunities program of the Department of Health Services Research. Her dissertation was supported by a pre-doctoral fellowship at the Seattle VAMC HSR&D program. Her training and research interests include chronic disease epidemiology among older adults, disability epidemiology, and outcomes research in rehabilitation and disability.

[Dorian Rose](#) is a physical therapist who recently received her PhD in December 2004 from the Department of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Her research interests are in the areas of upper and lower extremity motor control and recovery following stroke. Dr. Rose will be working with a number of RORC, BRRC, and university investigators in these topical areas.

PROJECT STAFF

[William “Billy” Lyman Jeffries IV](#) is a new research assistant for Dr. Christopher Faircloth. He is currently pursuing a PhD in the Department of Sociology and an MPH in the Department of Public Health at the University of Florida. His primary research interests include racial and ethnic health disparities, men’s health and sexuality, social epidemiology, and both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Jeffries received his *BA summa cum laude* from Florida Southern College in sociology, criminology, and religion.

[Randi Cameon](#) received her MPH from the University of North Carolina in 1990. She has been a licensed Physician’s Assistant since 1980 having received her training at the University of Florida. She worked for 8 years with the UF Department of Pediatrics Child Protection Team, and several years with the Institute for Child Health Policy. Randi will be working with Dr. Doug Ried at the RORC on a study examining treatment approaches for depression following acute stroke.

QUERI

[Janice Cockrell](#) is the Program Assistant for the Stroke QUERI and works closely with [Amber Waters](#). Prior to joining the QUERI, she worked for 22 years as administrative support in the insurance field. Welcome aboard!

STAFF NEWS

[Gerben DeJong](#) recently accepted a position at the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Washington, DC. The RORC bids him a fond farewell with wishes of much success in his new environs.

[Christopher Johnson](#), PhD will be leaving the RORC in June. He will continue his work on community nursing homes and long-term care at Texas A&M University. Dr. Johnson has been valuable colleague and active participant in Focus Group 1. Good Luck Dr. Johnson!

Congratulations are extended to [Sonya Gallagher](#) on her engagement to Charles Starling. An August wedding is planned.

Did you hear? [Kathy Byers](#) applied for, and received, a RR&D Associate Investigator award! Way to go Kathy!

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Improving Anti-thrombotic Use for Stroke Prevention***

PI: Rebecca J. Beyth, MD

Atrial fibrillation is a common disorder and an important risk factor for stroke. Evidence from controlled clinical trials shows that adjusted-dose warfarin decreases the risk of stroke by two-thirds. Clinical practice guidelines recommend that most atrial fibrillation patients receive life-long anticoagulation; only about one-third of atrial fibrillation patients receive it. This study is a randomized controlled trial of an intervention (the RBC) to increase the appropriate use of anti-thrombotic therapy (warfarin and aspirin) for stroke prevention in patients with chronic atrial fibrillation.

The intervention is a tailored patient-specific risk-benefit consult (RBC) that incorporates the risks and benefits of anti-thrombotic therapy for stroke prevention using the American College of Chest Physicians guidelines and the Outpatient Bleeding Risk Index, a validated risk assessment for major bleeding. The intervention is aimed at primary care providers practicing in different clinical settings. Evidence-based specific recommendations about the use of anti-thrombotic therapy, as well as the quality of anti-thrombotic management will be formulated for each atrial fibrillation patient in the intervention physician's panel. The control and the intervention physicians will also receive performance feedback in the form of an Achievable Benchmark of

Care (ABC) that informs them of the percentage of their patient panel with atrial fibrillation that is receiving anti-thrombotic therapy in relation to the other physicians (intervention or control) in their group. The primary outcome is the change, pre-to post-intervention, in the proportion of eligible patients with chronic atrial fibrillation who are prescribed anti-thrombotics. This will be measured by the proportion of the eligible patients in each physician's panel for whom anti-thrombotics are currently prescribed at baseline, 6-months, and 12-months. Secondary safety outcomes are the proportion of individuals in the physician's panel with stroke, the proportion of anticoagulated patients with major bleeds, and the proportion of total treatment time during which the International Normalized Ratio is below, above and within therapeutic range. This study will test a novel and generalizable approach to increasing the appropriate use of anti-thrombotic therapy in patients with atrial fibrillation in a community setting and the findings will provide valuable insight into stroke prevention.

*** This research is funded by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute as grant R01- HL070794. The project began in October, 2002 and is scheduled to run until September 30, 2007.

RORC PRESENCE AT THE HSR&D 2005 NATIONAL MEETING

VA Health Services Research and Development Service will hold its National Meeting February 16-18, 2005 in Washington, DC. The theme of this year's conference is "Improving Care for Veterans with Chronic Illnesses" and is hosted by the Houston Center for Quality of Care and Utilization Studies. The National Meeting provides VA investigators the opportunity to present the results of their research to colleagues, clinicians, and policy makers. Highlights of the conference include a keynote address, plenary paper sessions, exhibits, workshops and a poster session.

RORC investigators are presenting their research findings in a number of venues at the meeting. [Lisa Hannold](#), PhD is a speaker at the plenary session and presenting the topic "Empowerment: The Value of a Patient-Centered Approach to Care." [Sooyeon Kwon](#), PhD presents results from her study "Measuring Stroke Impact with SIS: Validity of SIS Telephone Administration" in Session K: Outcomes of Chronic Diseases, Friday morning. At the same time, [Diane Cowper](#), PhD has two oral presentations in the concurrent paper session "L." Both topics, "Access, Utilization, and Provider Selection Patterns of US Veterans" and "Using Location Based Analysis to Identify Gaps in VHA Services," are in the Access to Health Care breakout group.

In addition to oral presentations, a number of RORC staff are presenting their work at the poster session, including: [Charlie Jia](#), PhD, [Sandra Hubbard](#), PhD, [Craig Velozo](#), PhD and [Maude Rittman](#), PhD, RN.

RORC MISSION

To enhance access, quality,
and efficiency of
rehabilitation services
through interdisciplinary
research and
dissemination activities.

CONTACT US

Rehab Outcomes Research Center
Research Service (151B)
VA Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32608

Phone: (352) 376-1611, x 6843
Fax: (352) 271-4540
Email: rorc@med.va.gov

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Pamela W. Duncan

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Diane C. Cowper

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Ellen Esparolini
Elizabeth Cope

Layout and Design:
Kristen Wing

RORC RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Select Publications for 2004

Chumbler, N; Rittman, M; Van Puymbroeck, M; Vogel, W; Qin, H. The sense of coherence, burden, and depressive symptoms in informal caregivers during the first month after stroke. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 2004 Sep 27; 19(10): 944-953.

Cowper, D; Yu, W; Kuebeler, M; Manheim, L; Ripley, B. Using GIS in Government: An Overview of the VHA's Healthcare Atlas, FY-2000. *Journal of Medical Systems*, 2004 Jun 1; 28(3): 257-269.

Faircloth, C; Rittman, M; Boylstein, C; Van Puymbroeck, M. Energizing the Ordinary: Biographical Work and the Future in Stroke Recovery Narratives. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 2004 Sep 29; 18(4): 399-413.

Jia, H; Uphold, C; Wu, S; Reid, K; Findley, K; Duncan, P. Health-Related Quality of Life Among Men with HIV Infection: Effects of Social Support, Coping, and Depression. *AIDS Patient Care and STDs*, 2004 Oct 1; 18(10): 594-60.

Johnson, C; Dobalian, A; Burkhard, J; Hedgecock, D; Harman, J. Factors predicting lawsuits against nursing homes in Florida 1997-2001. *The Gerontologist*, 2004 Jun 1; 44(3): 339-347.

Kwon, S; Hartzema, A; Duncan, P; Lai, S. Disability measures in stroke: relationship among the Barthel Index, the Functional Independence Measure, and the Modified Rankin Scale. *Stroke; A Journal of Cerebral Circulation*, 2004 Apr 1; 35(4): 918-923.

Nudo, R; Duncan, P. Recovery and Rehabilitation in Stroke: Introduction. *Stroke; A Journal of Cerebral Circulation*, 2004 Nov 1; 35 (11_suppl_1): p.2690ff.

Ried, L; McKenzie, M. A Preliminary Report on the Academic Performance of Pharmacy Students in a Distance Education Program. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 2004 Jul 29; 68(3): 1-8.

Rittman, M; Faircloth, C; Boylstein, C; Gubrium, J; Williams, C; Van Puymbroeck, M; Ellis, C. The Experience of Time in the Transition from Hospital to Home Following Stroke. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, May/June 2004; 41(3A): 259-268.

Stansbury, J; Sierra, M. Risks, stigma and Honduran Garifuna conceptions of HIV/AIDS. *Social Science and Medicine*, 2004 Aug 1; 59(3): 457-471.

Studenski, S; Hayes, R; Leibowitz, R; Bode, R; Lavery, L; Walston, J; Duncan, P; Perera, S. Clinical global impression of change in physical frailty: development of a measure based on clinical judgment. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 2004 Sep; 52(9): 1560-1566.

Uphold, C; Maruenda, J; Yarandi, H; Sleasman, J; Bender, B. HIV and older adults: clinical outcomes in the era of HAART. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, 2004 Jul 1; 30(7): 16-24.

Wu, S; Yang, M. Evaluation of Current Rule in Figure Skating and Possible Improvements. *The American Statistician*, 2004 Feb 1; 58(1): 46-54.

Yu, W; Cowper, D; Berger, M; Kuebeler, M; Kubal, J; Manheim, L. Using GIS to Profile Health-Care Costs of VA Quality-Enhancement Research Initiative Diseases. *Journal of Medical Systems*, 2004 Jun 1; 28(3): 271-285.