Welcome to the Focus on Health Newsletter
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I am excited to present our latest issue of *Focus on Health* and share with you several new projects and developments both within our division and at University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford. First, thanks to our regional dean, Dr. Alex Stagnaro-Green and the strategic planning committee, we are building a strong research infrastructure for the College of Medicine at Rockford through the new Office of Research. Learn more about the Office of Research in this edition of our newsletter. We feature two research projects in this issue. One is headed up by Dr. Manu Khare. This is a collaborative, multi-level community based intervention in Stephenson and Carroll Counties to address obesity and chronic disease. The other project focused on identifying mental health issues in primary care and I worked in collaboration with three other sites nationally, and NSC Pearson. Highlights from our 21st Annual Research Day are also included. Dr. Manu Khare did a fantastic job in her first year chairing this event with the assistance of former chair, Dr. Alesia Jones and the research committee. Our alumni spotlight features one of our former James Scholar medical students. It is very rewarding to hear her speak so positively of her experience as a James Scholar and to see the long-term impact this is having on her career. Finally, we highlight McHenry County Department of Health as our community partner. As you will read, we have had a long standing relationship with them and have worked with them on several projects. I hope that you will find this issue as interesting as I do. If you are interested in collaborating with us on a project, please let us know!

Best wishes,

Sherry A. Falsetti, PhD
Assistant Dean of Research, Office of Research
Professor and Director, Division of Health Policy and Social Science Research
Department of Family and Community Medicine
University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford
FOCUS ON RESEARCH

Investigating a Web-based Tool for Mental Health Assessment in Primary Care: An Evaluation of Innerview

Dr. Sherry A. Falsetti recently served as the site PI for a four-site study undertaken to investigate Innerview, a Web-based application developed by NCS Pearson. The goal of the study was to determine whether Innerview could be feasibly implemented in primary care settings and whether it could accurately capture a patient narrative regarding mental health symptoms. The University L.P. Johnson Family Health Center (FHC), the clinic that houses the department of family and community medicine's family medicine residency program, served as our site. Drs. Joe Ross and Elizabeth Mendeloff referred patients to Dr. Falsetti to participate in the study. Other sites were the University of Colorado-Denver, Novant in North Carolina, and Intermed in Maine.

Innerview is an instrument that may have utility in screening, assessing, and monitoring a broad spectrum of common mental health illnesses being treated in primary care. Studies have shown that screening significantly improves detection of mental health problems. Innerview could provide a means to conduct routine, standardized screening that is convenient for both patients and primary care providers. Because Innerview uses electronic screening (e-screening), patients can complete it at their convenience prior to an office visit. Providers have the results prior to the visit, which can be used to determine the structure of the visit and perhaps reduce concerns vis-à-vis time to screen for mental health problems.

The study comprised three sessions with the participants, spanning 30-45 days, with a survey completed by the providers at the end of the three sessions. The total number of participants across all four sites was 139, with the Rockford site recruiting 69 participants. Session 1 included the initial administration of Innerview before the exam room visit, a patient survey, and an immediate retest (if applicable). The initial administration included the narrative and rating modules (if ratable symptoms were endorsed). This was followed by a patient survey and an immediate retest of the rating module to obtain the standard error of the mean (SEM) of the symptom ratings. For the patient survey, subjects were asked to rate 11 statements regarding their experience with Innerview on a scale of 1-5. Providers were asked to review the narrative with the patient and address any adverse events. This session used patient responses to specific items in the narrative module and the patient survey, and test/retest comparisons to obtain

Primary care is on the front lines of diagnosis and treatment of common mental health disorders. A study of the prevalence of mental disorders presenting in primary care found that 5.4% of patients sought relief for a psychiatric reason, but a psychiatric disorder was detected in 42.5% of all patients. Patients with depression are more likely to see a primary care provider than a mental health specialist for both diagnosis and treatment of depression. The patients treated in primary care settings report symptom severity similar to patients treated in specialty clinics. These studies highlight the importance of assessing for mental health problems in primary care settings.

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evidence of accuracy and reliability. Session 2 occurred 24-48 hours later. The narrative and rating modules were administered again either in the office or remotely. The short delay was used to obtain descriptive statistics for the reliability of Innerview. Session 3 was completed 30-45 days later with the administration of the rating module (if applicable). This session was used to illustrate the monitoring function of the system; it did not provide data points for analysis. A post-sessions survey was completed by providers who had a minimum of 15 subjects enrolled in the study. Providers were asked to rate 10 statements regarding the usefulness, feasibility, and acceptability of the system on a scale of 1-5.

Highlights from the findings indicated that 94.8% of subjects (n = 128) responded that this tool would contribute positively to their healthcare and 96.8% (n = 122) responded that it was comprehensive enough to capture all the symptoms they wanted to share with their providers. Providers found this tool to be clinically helpful in identifying, understanding, and treating their patients but suggested further work is needed to integrate the system into their workflow.

The analysis for the criteria agreement across two narratives administered 24-48 hours apart included 132 criteria. The percent of agreement of criteria endorsed or not endorsed between the two administrations for those with mental health concerns was 92% (n = 27, SD = 5, min 80%, max 100%). For those without mental health concerns, the agreement was 96% (n = 90, SD = 5, min 78%, max 100%). The mental health concerns group endorsed a mean of 19 criteria (SD = 19, min 0, max 74), while the no mental health concerns group endorsed a mean of 7 criteria (SD = 9, min 0, max 40).

The prevalence and broad impact of mental health issues on patients in primary care presents an ongoing challenge. Successful integration of physical and mental health care in primary care settings requires that patients with mental health needs are identified. Once a patient is identified as screening positive, a clinician must then elicit the story or context that validates the positive screen. Innerview has the promise to accomplish both in one step, enabling systematic identification of patients in need while putting their needs in context. This presents a strong signal that should prompt clinicians to act, which was confirmed by the clinicians’ assessment of Innerview utility in our study. The full manuscript for this study is currently under review for publication.

References
A Collaborative, Multi-Level Community-Based Intervention to Address Obesity and Chronic Disease in Two Rural Northern Illinois Counties

Rural populations experience greater health disparities, are more likely to report fair or poor health and have more chronic conditions than their urban and suburban counterparts.

Stephenson and Carroll Counties are two rural geographically contiguous counties in northwest Illinois with populations of 46,959 and 15,011 respectively. A significantly high proportion of residents in Stephenson (40.1%) and Carroll (81.9%) Counties are classified as rural as compared to 11.5% in the state overall. A higher proportion of adults in both counties are over the age of 65 as compared to the state overall and this proportion is rapidly growing. Residents of both counties show high rates of diabetes, heart disease, and current smoking. Over two-thirds of adults in both counties were obese or overweight. In addition, residents in these counties have limited access to physical activity and healthy foods.

In order to address these health disparities, the Stephenson and Carroll County Healthy Living Project (SCCHLP), Win With Wellness was developed. The goal of “Win With Wellness” is to use an evidence-based, multi-level intervention to reduce obesity and chronic disease risk for adult men and women living in two rural counties in northern Illinois.

“Win With Wellness” started as a collaborative effort among four partners:(i) the Stephenson County Health Department, (ii) the Carroll County Health Department; (iii) the FHN Hospital, Freeport, IL; (iv) the National Center for Rural Health Professions and Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford. M45, a Freeport based media consulting group is developing the broad-based media campaign. Since the start of the project we have added two additional partners the Monroe Clinic and United Way of Northwest Illinois.

Through a strategic planning process, the collaborative developed a mission and vision statement for the program with clear goals and objectives for the three year project. The mission of the Win With Wellness program is “To promote and support a sustainable culture for health and wellness in Stephenson and Carroll Counties through awareness, education, and behavioral change in order to reduce obesity and chronic disease.” Our vision statement is: “Healthy lifestyles and healthy communities for all in Stephenson and Carroll Counties.”

This project builds public-private partnerships that promote healthy lifestyles for individuals where they work, live and play, taking into consideration the constraints faced by rural populations. The project further strengthens the relationships between organizations in the two-county region that have improving population health as part of their organizational purpose. This community-engaged project has sought input from community members,

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key stakeholders, and leaders to develop and implement the programming. The program seeks to increase the awareness and knowledge of the population in Stephenson and Carroll Counties regarding obesity, chronic disease, and its relationship to physical activity, healthy eating, and lifestyle behavior change. The program has been designed using the socio-ecological model\textsuperscript{2} which addresses the multiple levels of behavior that influence health status associated with obesity and chronic disease. Levels of the framework include: individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and population-based.

At the individual level, the evidence-based TOPS\textsuperscript{3} (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly) program is being implemented at community locations and at small and medium worksites. Since the start of the project in May 2015, 15 TOPS groups have been initiated with a total of 165 participants. TOPS groups have been established in health care facilities, community locations, and worksites in both Stephenson and Carroll Counties. Participants have collectively lost over 500 lbs of weight.

At the community level, a previously developed and tested curriculum, Heart-to-Heart\textsuperscript{4,5} is being presented in local libraries, fitness centers, housing authority buildings, head start programs, recreation centers, park district facilities, church groups, and health events to increase awareness about obesity and chronic disease risks. The presentations include suggestions for impacting lifestyle factors such as physical activity and nutrition that influence risk. Over 50 Heart-to-Heart sessions have been conducted since the program began in 2015, reaching over 325 individuals.

At the population level, a broad-based media campaign is being implemented including local newspaper ads, billboards, radio spots, mass-mailings, printed materials, and a social media campaign targeting all residents in Stephenson and Carroll Counties. A social marketing approach has been used while planning and developing the messages. The media campaign was launched in August 2016 and included bill boards in Stephenson and Carroll Counties, newspaper advertisements and articles, radio announcements, and interviews with key partners. The program also launched a Facebook (FB) page which serves as a platform for TOPS groups to join a virtual community. The FB page is used as a way to provide more information about healthy lifestyles and serves as a way to acknowledge our successes.

For more information about the Win With Wellness program, contact Manorama Khare, PhD, University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford at mkhare1@uic.edu

Visit our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/winwithwellness123

The project is funded by a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (USDHHS/HRSA, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, Grant number: 1D04RH28413).

References


Introducing the Office of Research

In 2015, the Office of Research was developed as a result of the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford Strategic Plan. Dr. Sherry Falsetti was appointed as Assistant Dean of Research and directs the office. Dr. Falsetti will function in this role for half of her time and continue to serve as a Professor and the Director of the Division of Health Policy and Social Science Research in the Department of Family and Community Medicine for the other half of her time. The mission of the Office of Research is to increase student and faculty research productivity through developing infrastructure and providing research opportunities needed for students and faculty in the College of Medicine at Rockford. In order to centralize research efforts, Research Support Services, the College of Medicine Research Committee and the James Scholar Program were moved under the Office of Research. In addition to these programs, the office will provide services and administer internal grant funding mechanisms.

Office of Research Programs

**James Scholar Program**
- Spans all University of Illinois campuses
- Honors program with an emphasis on completing a research project
- Top 25% of medical students are eligible
- 35 medical students currently in the program

**Research Day**
Coordinated by the College of Medicine Research Committee Chair, Dr. Manorama Khare

**Student and Resident Research Travel Award**
Students or residents who are presenting research as a first author are eligible for up to $1,000 in reimbursement in conference registration and travel expenses.

**Office of Research Grant Funding Mechanisms**
- Bridge Grant Funding Award – one award a year, with up to $10,000 for one year
- Community, Clinical Research and Educational Grant Award – up to five $2,000 student awards and three $5,000 faculty awards per year

Office of Research Services
- Student research mentoring and connecting students to researchers
- Consultation on study design
- Grant writing assistance
- Statistical assistance
- Guidance with IRB applications and approval
- Resources for potential funding mechanisms

Future Initiatives
- Publish newsletter with helpful research information and opportunities
- Create database of potential research mentors and collaborators
- Provide research opportunities for all students who would like to be involved in research

Faculty and Staff for the Office of Research
- Sherry A. Falsetti, PhD, Assistant Dean of Research, Professor and Director, Division of Health Policy and Social Science Research, Department of Family and Community Medicine
- Lori Dredske, Administrative Aide/Research Coordinator
- Patrick McIntyre, MS, IRB Coordinator/Research Support Specialist
- Vicki Weidenbacher Hoper, MSW, Grants Writer/Grants Development Specialist
- TBA, Biostatistician
University of Illinois Rockford Hosts its 21st Annual Research Day

Annual Research Day was held on April 13, 2016. Students and faculty from the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy, residents from our residency program, and researchers from affiliated and regional institutions shared their research projects. The full day forum is hosted by the campus research committee chaired by Alesia Jones, PhD, assistant professor, director of research, department of family and community medicine and interim chair Manorama M. Khare, PhD, research assistant professor, department of family and community medicine.

The forum showcased a diversity of scientific studies including basic science, clinical research, social science, community research, and clinical cases. A total of 83 posters were presented, 74 first author posters represented researchers from the campus programs: medicine, MBT, pharmacy, and nursing. Nine posters were presented by researchers from other academic institutions (Saint Anthony College of Nursing, Rockford University, and Northern Illinois University).

This year the focus of research day was childhood obesity. The day started with a keynote address by the mayor of Rockford – Larry Morrissey, titled “Improving Community Health Outcomes through Collective Impact – Healthy Rockford, Healthy Children.” The talk was attended by close to 200 people.

Following the mayor’s talk there was a panel discussion on childhood obesity with four panelists –

- **Dr. Jamie Chriqui**, Professor of Health Policy and Administration, School of Public Health, Institute of Health Policy and Research, UIC, Chicago
- **Dr. Eduardo Bustamante**, Assistant Professor, Kinesiology and Nutrition; UIC, Chicago
- **Dr. Katrina Nguyen**, Pediatric GI Specialist; Founder of Faithful2Fitness, Rockford
- **Patti Nelligan**, Peppy Up program at RPS after school programs Grades 3-5, Rockford

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The panel was co-moderated by Dr. Sandra Martell, Public Health Administrator for Winnebago County Health Department and Harsh Shah a 3rd year medical student.

Student presentations included Mark Frakes from the College of Medicine at Rockford, John Mihelcic from the Rural Medical Education (RMED) program, Kirthana Prabhakar from the Masters in Medical Biotechnology program, and Yilin Sun from the College of Pharmacy. We ended the day with awards being presented in 11 categories to students recognizing their excellent research.

Research Day is supported by the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford’s Office of the Regional Dean and the generosity of local institutions: Winnebago County Medical Society, Dr. Steve Gunderson, Rockford Anesthesiologists Associated, LLC, and Rockford Ambulatory Surgery Center.

**Research Day 2017**

The next Research Day will be on Friday, April 21, 2017. Watch for details in future newsletters.
Best Basic Science Research Poster Award
Sponsor: Thermo Fisher Scientific
Poster title: Use of Minicircle DNA as a Tool to Induce RNAi to Knockdown Oncogenic EML4-ALK in Lung Cancer Cell Lines
Winner: Pooja Narendra

Best Case Report Award
Sponsor: Rockford Anesthesiologists Associated
Poster title: From Intractable Hiccups to Quadriplegia: A Case Report on Neuromyelitis Optica in a 42 Year Old Caucasian Woman
Winner: Jonathon Martins

Best MBT Student Research Poster Award
Sponsor: MBT Program and Department of Biomedical Sciences
Poster title: Vaccines for Experimental Atherosclerosis
Winner: Sunil Palani

Best Medical Student Technical Poster Award (Tie)
Sponsor: Winnebago County Medical Society
Poster title: Local vs Systemic Antibiotics for Surgical Prophylaxis in a Rat Model
Winner: Craig Forsthoefel

Poster title: Sickle Cell Patients Experience Delay in Analgesic Administration with Respect to National Guidelines Despite Severity of Presentation
Winner: Ijeoma Agu

Best Use of Literature in a Student Research Project
Sponsor: Crawford Library of the Health Sciences
Poster title: Chest Flap Reconstruction for Coverage of Complex Hand Injuries with Severe Soft Tissue Loss
Winner: Anthony Logli

Biomedical Sciences Best Research Poster Award
Sponsor: Department of Biomedical Sciences
Poster title: Development of Oligospermines as Nucleic Acid Carriers
Winner: Banan Darwich

Dean's Action Council Award
Sponsor: Dean's Action Council, U of I College of Medicine at Rockford
Poster title: #IAmAMinorityInMedicine: Preparing Minority Youth for Health Professions
Winner: Jenny Tumba

Encouraging Excellence in Rural Health Award
National Center for Rural Health Professions (Tie)
Poster title: Assessing Women in Mason County, Illinois’ Knowledge of and Access to Prenatal Care
Winner: Natalie Allen

Poster title: Exploring the Epidemiology of Substance Use and Abuse in Rural Adolescents
Winner: Mark Frakes

Innovation in Basic Science Research Award
Sponsor: Office of the Regional Dean, U of I College of Medicine at Rockford
Poster title: In Vivo Editing of a Human Anti-cancer Drug Target: An MBT 530 Project for Biomedical Applications
Winner: MBT 530 Class of 2016

James Scholar Award
Sponsor: James Scholar Program
Poster title: Investigating Mechanism of Action and Pharmacokinetic Properties of Oligonucleotides Homologous to the Telomere Overhang in Melanoma
Winner: Mark Frakes

Outstanding Poster Award (Tie)
Sponsor: University of Illinois College of Pharmacy at Rockford
Poster title: Use of Minicircle DNA as a Tool to Induce RNAi to Knockdown Oncogenic EML4-ALK in Lung Cancer Cell Lines
Winner: Pooja Narendra

Poster title: Evidence for Participation of a Short Open Reading Frame (sORF)-Encoded Protein in DNA Repair?
Winner: Matthew Summerlin

Supporting Model Public Health Practices Research Award
Sponsor: Winnebago County Department of Public Health and its Board of Health
Poster title: A Qualitative Analysis of Barriers to Healthy Living in Rural Stephenson and Carroll Counties, Illinois
Winner: Qing Wang

Sister Mary Linus Nowak Research Award
Sponsor: Saint Anthony College of Nursing
Poster title: The Relationship Between Depression Scores and Readmission Rates in Patients with CHF
Winner: Sarah Linder
Ami Thakor Phillip, MD ’12
Second Year Allergy/immunology Fellow
at the Greater Los Angeles VA/UCLA Program

Participating in the James Scholar program in medical school at UICOM-R gave me a great appreciation for research and scholarly activity which I continued to participate in during residency. My project in medical school revolved around understanding the management of asthma among adolescents. The project also involved identifying effective ways to educate asthmatic adolescents about their symptoms and how to better control their symptoms, which I had a special interest in.

During my internal medicine residency at UCLA, I continued to conduct research on allergy/immunology. I was involved in a large retrospective chart review study on patients who have tested negative on histamine control during penicillin skin testing and the factors that may be associated. This study was published in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology* in July 2015. I was also part of a publication called “Primary Immunodeficiency Diseases in Adults” in *ACP Hospitalist* in October 2014. Another manuscript that I published was “Successful Stem Cell Transplantation in Chediak-Higashi Syndrome” in *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology In Practice* in March 2015. I also presented case reports at both Internal Medicine and Allergy national conferences during residency.

For my allergy/immunology fellowship, I provide lectures to UCLA internal medicine residents on allergy related topics during their noon conferences. I have participated in our allergy/immunology meetings by presenting interesting cases in November 2015 and March 2016.

I was proud to be able to present my James Scholar research at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) in March 2016 and this project culminated into a published abstract. Acceptance of my project at AAAI demonstrated and solidified that my hard work in medical school conducting research was valuable. Recently, I presented at the California Society of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology conference about venom allergy. My manuscript, “Evaluation of Venom Allergy” was recently accepted for publication in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*. Additionally, I have written a chapter on “Immunoglobulin Deficiencies” in a book to be used for trainees that will likely be published later this year.

Participating in research has helped me become a well-rounded, curious and enthusiastic clinician. I appreciate all the help and mentoring the James Scholar Program gave me during medical school.
McHENRY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) serves the residents of McHenry County, Illinois. With a population of 307,343 (U.S. Census, 2015 Population Estimate), the county reflects a blend of rural, suburban, and urban living. The county’s diverse make up is comprised of 83% non-Hispanic white, 12% Hispanic/Latino(a), 3% Asian, and 1% black. Two of these subgroups, Hispanic and Asian populations, have grown dramatically during the past 15 years. Considered one of the “Big 8” Chicago collar counties, McHenry County is not dominated by a single large community but is comprised of 30 incorporated areas and five cities, the most populous of which is Crystal Lake (40,448 population).

Through a long and productive relationship with Health Systems Research (HSR), the Department of Health has used a data-driven approach to examining health needs including the broader dimensions of social and economic determinants of health. The Department has also taken the leadership role in creating and sustaining the McHenry County Healthy Community Partnership, an endeavor that has played a central role in examining the county’s community needs and creating avenues to address them. According to Joe Gugle, MCDH’s Manager for Planning, Personnel, and Administration, “These assessments have fostered strong community collaboration, tackling issues such as access to care, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and mental health issues. They are instrumental in defining and targeting priority health issues.”

Currently, the Department is working with community partners and Health Systems Research on the 2016 McHenry County Healthy Community Study. This needs assessment study has been repeated every four to five years since the mid-1990s with 2016 serving as the third time the process has used the Mobilizing for Action through Partnerships and Planning (MAPP) model. Embracing both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the study components include a survey developed by HSR in conjunction with partners and focus groups of community leaders as well as at-risk populations. Along with a detailed description of current demographics, socio-economic characteristics, and health statistics prepared by the Department of Health, the information from all three components will be synthesized to discern pressing health issues. Again, Gugle explains, “Once analyzed by HSR, the product of this study will launch further collaborative initiatives and provide the community with the most up to date data and trends needed for short and long-term strategic planning for local organizations.”

During the past three years, Health Systems Research has also collaborated with MCDH to conduct a multi-part assessment of children’s oral health needs, held a series of focus groups about physical activity among children and adults for We Choose Health, and conducted a community-wide survey about the awareness and attitudes concerning West Nile and other tick-borne diseases.

Established in 1966, the McHenry County Department of Health’s main office is located in Woodstock with satellite clinic services and the Veterinary Public Health Division housed in Crystal Lake. The health department contains four divisions: nursing, environmental health, veterinary public health, and administration. Each division carries out a range of essential functions.
Contract Awarded to Khare

Dr. Manorama M. Khare was recently awarded a contract to evaluate the use of a mobile application (App) for fertility assessment by primary care providers. The mobile application will be tested with primary care providers at all four UIC campuses in the near future.

Health Systems Research (HSR) Current Projects

ROCKFORD ARTS INFUSION, Rockford Public Schools. Evaluation of a federal grant designed to coach local artists about teaching practices which they use to integrate art concepts into math classes at selected middle and elementary schools. The intent is to improve student attendance, discipline, and academic performance. Deborah Lischwe serves as external evaluator for this grant.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTS EDUCATORS, Rockford Public Schools. This grant funded by U.S. Department of Education provides arts educators working in Rockford public middle and high schools professional development aimed at integrating art into the core curriculum. Students are expected to show improvement in their math and reading scores as well as stronger enrollment in fine arts electives. Deborah Lischwe serves as external evaluator for this grant.

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS, Illinois Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, and Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Illinois for the 21st Century Community Learning Center after school program sites. Michelle Bunyer provides grant reporting and technical assistance for the 54 sites. Tasks performed include evaluation planning, survey design, analysis of academic and survey data, reporting of data to the Illinois State Board of Education, and collaboration with the organizations to produce evaluation reports describing after school program operations and student outcomes.

MCHECRY COUNTY HEALTHY COMMUNITY 2016/2017, McHenry County, IL. The McHenry County Healthy Community Collaborative has launched a three-part assessment of community needs. A survey of area residents was conducted that asked about the availability and accessibility of community features, access to care (medical, dental, mental health, and substance abuse services), health insurance coverage, and prevalence of physical and mental health conditions/diseases. Focus groups were held with either community leaders or target populations to discuss community problems and experiences with obtaining care. Findings of these studies will be analyzed along with an in-depth description McHenry County demographics, socio-economic indicators, and health outcomes. The overall project will identify the top issues requiring greater community attention and the leading health problems among residents of the county. Deborah Lischwe is the lead researcher on this study.

FREEPORT BIKING SURVEY, Freeport Park District. The Freeport Park District has contracted with HSR to develop and conduct a survey about biking preferences, behaviors, and attitudes among Freeport residents. Deborah Lischwe is providing technical assistance for this project.

Deborah Lischwe Retires!

Deborah Lischwe, MS, the associate director of Health Systems Research will retire in January 2017. Deborah has been at Health Systems Research since 2002.

In her years at HSR, Deborah has worked extensively with the Rockford community as well as over a dozen counties in Northern Illinois to conduct healthy community studies. She has extensive background in community health, health system planning, and program evaluation. Among her areas of interest and expertise are community health status assessments, survey research, and evaluation studies. Deborah earned a master’s degree from the University of Cincinnati in Community Health with a dual emphasis in health planning and epidemiology. Her graduate study was the outgrowth of Peace Corps work and breast cancer epidemiology research. Prior to coming to HSR, Deborah worked as a planner in the hospital/health system setting for 18 years. Most of her professional publications address ways to help organizations understand and improve community health.

Mike Bacon, the past public health administrator of the Winnebago County Health Department had this to say about Deb: “Deb has been one of northern Illinois’ most exemplary practitioners of the science and art of assessing community health needs and assets and educating communities on contributory health factors. This has been during an era when our health care system has remained focused on treating patient health conditions, but then return to the circumstances that contributed to their illness in the first place. More recently however the broader contributions to health (i.e. social determinants) are increasingly understood and slowly being incorporated in patient and community care systems, in part because of the fundamental work of Health Systems Research and the invaluable skill of insightful practitioners like Deb Lischwe. Thank you Deb for your quiet leadership. All will really miss your cheerful, caring service to our community and region.”

All of us at HPSSR wish her well!

SAVE THE DATE!

Retirement Party for Deborah Lischwe

Please join us to wish Deborah Lischwe best wishes on her retirement, Wednesday, January 11, 2017, 3:00-5:00pm at the University of Illinois Rockford, 1601 Parkview Avenue, Rockford, Illinois.

Michelle Bunyer leaves HSR

Michelle joined the HSR staff in July 1998 to support the Winnebago-Boone-Ogle Healthy Community project. Her work for the College over the past 18 years has focused on community surveys, community data analysis, needs assessments, and after school program evaluation. Currently, she conducts the evaluations for several after school program providers across the state, guiding evaluation efforts for more than 50 sites. Some of the organizations Michelle has worked closely with include the Rockford Public Schools, Rockford Park District, Illinois Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, McHenry County Healthy Community Partnership, and Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Illinois.

Michelle Bunyer has served as an information services specialist and has drawn on her previous experience with coordinating multi-site data collection, managing large data sets related to survey information, and compiling and describing data from state and national data sources. She graduated from the University of Missouri with a Master of Arts degree in clinical psychology with a focus on children. Prior to joining Health Systems Research, she coordinated studies at the Rush Institute on Aging in Chicago focused on the impact of caregiving on Alzheimer’s disease patients’ families and nutrition in an older adult community population.

According to Deborah Lischwe, associate director for Health Systems Research, “Michelle will be sorely missed by colleagues and clients. Her unmatched attention to detail, dedication in meeting customers’ needs, and keen analytical abilities have strengthened the department and extended our reach into many communities throughout the state.”
Recent Publications and Presentations from HPSSR Researchers

Publications


Presentations


Lischwe, Deborah. Stephenson County Demographics. Stephenson County Leadership Institute (Freeport), September 21, 2016.

Lischwe, D., Delanty, D. (Rockford Park District) and Groh, J. (Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau). Online versus mail surveys yield different results. Accepted for presentation at American Public Health Association Annual Meeting (Denver, CO), November 2016.
Sherry Falsetti, PhD
falsetti@uic.edu

Sherry A. Falsetti, PhD, is the director of the division of health policy and social science research, professor and the associate dean of the office of research. She is also a licensed clinical psychologist and recently completed a certification in health coaching with an emphasis on holistic nutrition.

Dr. Falsetti’s research and clinical practice focus on the physical and mental health effects of trauma on women and the treatment of post traumatic stress disorder and panic attacks. She developed Multiple Channel Exposure Therapy (MCET) for post traumatic stress disorder and panic attacks, and is known for the Modified PTSD Symptom Scale, which has been translated to 17 different languages and has been used in at least 35 countries around the world. Dr. Falsetti is currently working with NCI Pearson to test a web-based tool to identify mental health disorders in a primary care setting, revising her treatment to include mindfulness components and address holistic health, and serving as a consultant on a study testing her treatment with veterans at the Houston VA. She hopes to begin a study of the effectiveness of health coaching for women who have comorbid PTSD and chronic disease in a primary care setting.

Dr. Falsetti earned her doctoral degree from University of Missouri-St. Louis and a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Medical University of South Carolina, where she was also a faculty member for 10 years. She has been with the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford for the past 11 years and during her career has won numerous awards, including the Faculty Scientist-Practitioner Award, Golden Apple Teaching Award, a Professional Contribution Recognition Award for professional contribution in the aftermath of September 11th from the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy, and the YWCA Women of Achievement Professions Award. Dr. Falsetti has had research funding from the National Institutes of Health, Center for Disease Control, Department of Defense, and the Illinois Department of Public Health among others.

Areas of Interest
• Treatment of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental and physical health problems associated with trauma exposure
• Influence of culture on doctor-patient communication
• Identification of trauma and PTSD in primary care
• Health coaching

Alesia Jones, PhD
alesiah@uic.edu

Alesia Jones, PhD, is a clinical psychologist and assistant professor in the department of family and community medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford. She serves as the director of research in the department. Dr. Jones also serves as chair of the campus research committee. Dr. Jones’ research area focuses on the study of interpersonal violence and the psychological, emotional, and behavioral consequences of victimization. Her research also includes examination of healthcare delivery to violence exposed individuals and improving the identification and response to victims of violence within the context of primary care.

Dr. Jones has been the recipient of numerous awards in recognition of her research, clinical work, and teaching including the Robert Magwood, Jr Award for Outstanding Service to Crime Victims and 2011 Rockford YWCA Women of Achievement, Professions Award. She has been awarded grants and scholarships from the National Institute of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, University of Illinois, and the Medical University of South Carolina. She has published peer-reviewed articles and book chapters related to trauma and present on violence exposure and mental health at national and local conferences.

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Prior to joining the College of Medicine, she completed a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, at the Medical University of South Carolina.

Areas of Interest
- Identification of family and interpersonal violence in primary care
- Mental health disparities among ethnic/racial minorities and impoverished communities
- Community violence and homicide survivorship
- Violence prevention research
- Workshops and presentations on adolescent and adult violence exposure

Manorama M. Khare, PhD
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Manorama M. Khare, PhD, is a research assistant professor at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford with extensive experience in research related to rural and underserved populations, women's health, and diversity in higher education. Her technical expertise includes program evaluation, planning and implementation of community-based programs, quantitative and qualitative research methods, quasi experimental research designs, survey development and multivariate data analysis.

The focus of her research has been reducing cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk in women using behavioral lifestyle change interventions. She is currently the lead evaluator for the Illinois WISE-WOMAN program and CVD risk reduction program for underinsured and uninsured women across the state. For the past six years, she has served as co-investigator on a collaborative effort of the UIC National Center for Excellence in Women’s Health and the Illinois Department of Health to improve the cardiovascular risk profiles for adult women living in rural southern Illinois.

Dr. Khare earned her doctoral degree in public health from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Prior to this position, she was a senior research specialist at the Center for Research on Women and Gender and the National Center for Excellence in Women’s Health at UIC.

Areas of Interest
- Women's health
- Rural health
- Behavioral lifestyle change interventions
- Use of mHealth to promote behavior change
- Program evaluation
- Planning and implementation of community programs
- Diversity in higher education

Michelle Bunyer
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Michelle Bunyer has been a research data analyst for Health Systems Research since 1998. She graduated from the University of Missouri with a MA in clinical psychology with a focus on children. Prior to joining Health Systems Research, she worked as a study coordinator at the Rush Institute on Aging in Chicago. Bunyer coordinated a study of caregivers of Alzheimer’s disease patients and a study of nutrition in an older adult community population and has been an evaluator for the Rockford Public Schools’ 21st CCLC After School Program Grants for the last 10 years.

Areas of Interest
- After school program evaluation
- Healthy community surveys
- Community needs assessments
- Survey research
- Program evaluation
FOCUS ON WHO WE ARE

Deborah Lischwe
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Deborah Lischwe is the associate director of Health Systems Research a division of HPSSR. She has extensive background in community health and health system planning. In recent years, she has assisted more than a dozen county health departments with “healthy community” studies. Ms. Lischwe earned a master of science degree from the University of Cincinnati in Community Health with a dual emphasis in health planning and epidemiology. Her graduate study was the outgrowth of Peace Corps work and breast cancer epidemiology research. Prior to her present position, Ms. Lischwe worked as a planner in the hospital/health system setting for 18 years. Most of her professional publications address ways to help organizations understand and improve community health. In addition to her membership in several professional organizations, she assists numerous school and community groups in a volunteer capacity.

Areas of Interest
• Community health indicators and needs
• Health disparities
• Health system analysis
• Survey research
• County and small area prevalence estimates, incidence rates and other health indicators
• Consultation on health-related activities

James A. Powers, Jr., LCSW
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James A. Powers, Jr., LCSW, has been part of Health Systems Research since 2008. He previously served in professional and administrative capacities for a wide variety of not-for-profit organizations that provided counseling and family services, employee assistance, hospital outpatient psychiatry, services for child abuse and neglect, and child development and disability services. He either serves or has served on a number of not-for-profit and foundation boards. At Health Systems Research, his primary work focuses on healthy community studies and mental health program evaluation and needs assessment. His projects include assessments for a variety of Mental Health 708 Boards, such as DeKalb County, Oak Park, and Hanover Township, and evaluations for such projects as for the children’s mental health system of care project operating in Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside Counties funded by the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation.

Administrative Staff

Vicki Cummings and Sharon Myers

Vicki Cummings and Sharon Myers provide administrative support to Health Systems Research (HSR). Their primary responsibilities include word processing, data entry and preparation of reports for research studies conducted by HSR. They each hold an associate degree in office technology from Rock Valley College.

Lori Dredske
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Lori Dredske provides administrative support and assists with the development and coordination of activities for the office of research and the division of health policy and social science research, department of family and community medicine. Lori is the first point of contact for the James Scholar program, the Student and Resident Travel Awards and other funding mechanisms that will be administered through the office of research.