As Francois de la Rochefoucauld once said, “the only constant in life is change.” Our division is no exception to this. Dr. Kim Hart left to take a position at the University of Iowa. Laverne Larson, who provided administrative support to the division retired in December, 2015. We wish them both the best in their new roles.

We have also had some exciting additions to report since our last newsletter. We welcome Dr. Inis Bardella as visiting head of the Department of Family and Community Medicine. Learn more about her passion for leadership, education, research, and clinical work in this issue. I, too, have had a change in my role. I will continue as the director of the Division of Health Policy and Social Science Research, but have stepped down as the associate head of the Department of Family and Community Medicine in order to take the position as assistant dean of research. In my new role, I will advance and direct the new Office of Research for the College of Medicine at Rockford. Expect to learn more about the Office of Research in a future issue. In the current issue, we present Dr. Jillian Kaskavage, who is a College of Medicine at Rockford alum. She was also a James Scholar student that I advised. We are so happy she has chosen to return to Rockford after completing her residency in pediatrics at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. We also present the work of Health Systems Research in conducting the evaluation of a four county children’s mental health project funded by the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation. Dr. Khare shares an update on her research investigating a texting program to promote walking in rural women. This project is an excellent example of technology and behavior change coming together to improve health outcomes.

We are also excited to highlight the Stephenson County Health Department as our community partner. Dr. Khare has been working closely with them as a co-PI on the HRSA funded project, “Win with Wellness” to promote healthy lifestyles.

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
Dr. Inis Jane Bardella, Visiting Professor and Head of the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford (UICOMR), received her B.A. in biology from Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, PA (1981) and her MD from the Temple University School of Medicine, Philadelphia, PA (1985). She completed family medicine residency training at Washington Hospital, Washington, PA (1985-1988).

Dr. Bardella served as a family physician and emergency physician in rural Pennsylvania for eight years prior to entering academic medicine at the University of Pittsburgh in 1996. The focus of her academic career has been medical education development and evaluation, and faculty development and evaluation within and beyond the borders of the United States. These elements are hallmarks throughout Dr. Bardella’s education, research, and administrative activities spanning the University of Pittsburgh, Indiana University, the University of Colorado, the National University of Rwanda, Chicago Medical School at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, and now UICOMR. She has several publications, awards, and funded projects in the areas of medical education development and medical information access at the point-of-care. Dr. Bardella’s research involves assessment of the impact of global health student experiences and of faculty development outcomes. She has served on regional, state, and national committees addressing medical education and workforce issues. Dr. Bardella most values the opportunities she has been given to mentor students, residents, and faculty in six countries.

At UICOMR, Dr. Bardella is leading efforts of the department to enhance and redesign medical education, residency education, research, and clinical care. The College and Department are engaging in processes and approaches to ensure current and future health professionals improve health outcomes locally and globally. Dr. Bardella is a family physician at the L.P. Johnson Family Health Center and SwedishAmerican Hospital. Her emphasis and passion in clinical practice is the care of underserved rural and urban populations in the U.S. and globally.

(continued)
Learn more about her experience and her vision for the department.

Please tell us about your past experiences of your work both in the U.S. and internationally and how it has influenced your career?

Being from a rural community, I entered medicine expecting to work as a rural family physician and missionary physician. Over the last 27.5 years, the path of my career has traversed rural family medicine, rural emergency medicine, urban underserved practice, suburban practice, global medical education development, and academic faculty positions at six universities (University of Pittsburgh, Indiana University, University of Colorado, National University of Rwanda, Rosalind Franklin University/Chicago Medical School, University of Illinois Rockford College at Medicine). This has involved the education of students, residents, and faculty in the U.S. and seven countries. My background, the call to serve the underserved and these experiences have crafted my focus on mentoring leaders and developing medical education that will prepare health professionals who will improve health outcomes globally.

What are your research interests? Please tell us about research you have done or are currently doing.

My research focuses on measuring the outcomes of medical education interventions. A current project is assessing the influence of global health experiences on medical student specialty choice and practice location. Past projects include evaluation of faculty development on teaching by community physicians and the influence of point-of-care access to medical information on clinical decision making. I believe we must measure and report what we do in medical education and how it influences the provision of care and health outcomes.

Why did you choose to come to UICOMR?

Medical education is the foundation to everything we do in medicine. Impacting medical education such that we prepare physicians who will improve health outcomes with attention to the underserved is one of my passions. I am a leader who facilitates and builds. I was searching for a leadership opportunity where my abilities, interests, and experiences would be desired to support growth of the education enterprise. UICOMR matched well and the doors just kept opening here. It is very clear to me and my husband that this is where we are meant to be.

What is your vision for the DFCM at Rockford?

My overall vision for the department is growth and vitality in education, research, and clinical practice such that we are improving health outcomes in Rockford and beyond.
HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH: Evaluator for Four County Children’s Mental Health System of Care

In a significant Illinois based initiative, the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation is in the process of funding a children’s mental health project “Building Systems of Care, Community by Community,” an effort to develop coordinated and integrated community-based collaborations to improve children’s mental health. Children’s mental health is made up of all areas of development: A child’s ability to learn, grow physically, communicate, problem solve, and thrive socially and emotionally. For this effort children’s mental health is also defined to include possible substance use issues.

One of the four sites awarded funds to develop and implement a redesigned system of care is the Community That Cares Project (CTC), a multi-county initiative operating in Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside Counties. The four county collaboration currently encompasses over sixty entities that are working together to redesign the system of care and covers 2,613 square miles, 35,953 children with a 13% teen pregnancy rate and a poverty rate averaging 14.7%. Other sites selected for funding by the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation are Livingston County, Adams County, and the City of Springfield. Funding for each site is for seven years.

Schools, primary care providers, county health departments, agencies, and early childhood programs are key elements in developing processes that seek to screen up to 90% of the children and youth in the four counties on a yearly basis. As a core element of the system of care, using screening tools is critical in correctly identifying mental health problems and developmental disabilities as seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions Identified Correctly</th>
<th>Detection Rates</th>
<th>Detection Rates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without Screening Tools</td>
<td>With Screening Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental disabilities</td>
<td>30%¹</td>
<td>70-80%²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health problems</td>
<td>20%³</td>
<td>80-90%⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the third year of the grant, 11,920 children out of the 35,953 in the four counties were screened. Prior to that time no systematic screening for mental health and developmental disability issues existed in the multi-county area. Depending on the nature of positive screens (high or very high), children or youth are assessed and referred to different types and levels of intervention, ranging from education and support groups within schools or other programs to services through a mental health, substance abuse, or developmental disabilities program.

Family Care Coordinators, another key component of the local multi-county system, work with a Care Team in each county to facilitate linkages between children and their families with resources required to facilitate the development of a child or youth’s mental health. A needs assessment done by Health Systems Research prior to the inception of the project indicated that isolation is a major issue in these largely rural counties and that outreach services to these communities are important to ensure that children and their families receive services particularly for mental health.

The promotion and prevention pieces of the project include increasing the number of Kindergarten - 12th grade schools participating in universal social and emotional education, the expansion and promotion of key resource websites in the multi-county system of care, and the provision of parent education events to increase awareness of children’s mental health among parents in all four counties.

Cross site evaluation encompassing all four sites funded by the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation grants is provided by NTI Upstream based in Chicago. Local evaluation is provided through Health Systems Research at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford.

Improvements in the timeliness of referral, assessment and treatment services, care coordination processes, availability of services, satisfaction with services, and linkages of children with medical homes are all being evaluated.

Key findings and accomplishments to date:

- Screening of 11,920 children birth to 18 (33% of the total children/youth population in the four counties).
- Consistent positive screening rates of 13% for children 0-5 years of age; 15% for children 6-18 years of age; and 15% overall positive screening rate for children 0-18.
- Implementation of coordinated and documented care processes.
- The top three concerns of providers making referrals to Family Care Coordinators: Isolation/limited support; Housing; and Transportation. Top three reasons providers made referrals to Family Care Coordinators: Social and Emotional Development; Significant Family Stress; and Anger.
- Children’s internalized emotional issues (anxiety, depression, etc.) occurring at a more frequent rate than external behavioral and attention issues. Internalized emotional issues are often missed without the screening process in place.

The Community That Cares is funded through 2018 with key elements identified to sustain the redesign of a rural multi-county system of care, a key requirement of the funding from the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation.
A Texting Program to Promote Walking in Rural Women

Rural women have poorer health than their urban counterparts. The Committee on Health Care for Underserved Women report that rural women suffer higher rates of cardiovascular disease (CVD), are more obese, and have higher rates of mortality and morbidity associated with lifestyle factors such as smoking, diet, and physical activity.\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^3\) Interventions targeting these lifestyle behaviors have been successful in reducing CVD risk factors in women.\(^4\)\(^5\)\(^6\) A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials studying the effect of walking on CVD risk showed that regular walking can result in positive changes in several CVD risk factors including aerobic fitness, blood pressure, waist circumference, and body mass index.\(^7\)

The amount, frequency, and quality of health information that can be provided in face-to-face contacts or through educational materials by health care providers is limited. Healthcare providers have limited time to spend with patients in rural communities and additional logistical barriers such as transportation, cost, and travel distance to clinics intensify the problem. Hence, providers need innovative and effective ways to motivate and empower individuals to choose and maintain healthy lifestyle behaviors. Sending individually tailored text messages (SMS) to address these lifestyle risk factors is one way to reach rural women.

Mobile health technology (mHealth) using tailored text messages (Short Message Service/SMS) at regular intervals can promote health-related behaviors. The frequency and content of the messages can be tailored to meet each individual's needs. Messages are integrated into individual lifestyles and can be provided at a relatively low cost. mHealth technology has been used successfully to enhance self-efficacy (such as feedback on success) and to provide social support (from peers, health professionals, health educators), both factors that have been shown to have a significant effect on health behavior change.\(^8\)

mHealth technologies have been used with varying degrees of success to increase smoking cessation, increase physical activity, increase safer sexual behavior, and reduce alcohol consumption.\(^9\) However, few studies have examined the use of mHealth technologies for health promotion in rural communities in the U.S.

Data from the Pew Research Center\(^10\) shows that overall 90% of U.S. adults and 88% of adults in rural communities own a cell phone; 68% of all U.S. adults and 52% of adults in rural communities own a smartphone. Overall, two-thirds of cell phone owners (62%), 33% of women and 29% of men have accessed health information on their phone. More women than men use phones to access health information. One-fifth of smartphone users (19%) have at least one health-related application on their phone. The most popular health applications are related to exercise, diet, and weight. Women and adults below the age of 50 are more likely to download a health application.\(^11\) Overall trends suggest utilization of mobile devices for health information is growing.

Given the need in rural communities the potential to promote health and the broad reach of this technology, Dr. Khare designed a pilot study to develop a testing intervention – Step-2-It, to assess the short-term effects on walking levels in rural women.

English speaking women aged 40 years or older, residing in Stephenson or surrounding rural counties who owned a cell phone and had an unlimited texting plan were eligible to participate in the study. Flyers and posters were displayed in the health department and interested women called to enroll in the study. Interested women attended an initial recruitment meeting where they were provided more information about the study. Women who agreed to participate provided written consent. Baseline data obtained from the participants included body weight, a demographic and health history questionnaire, and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) physical activity questionnaire. At this meeting participants also received a pedometer and were instructed on how to use it. Automated text messages were sent using mytapp, a Ruby on Rails application. For the first week, participants received a text daily at a time of their choosing asking them to report the number of steps from the previous day. Starting in week 2, participants received an additional text which was (continued)
informational, inspirational, or motivational. In addition, data from the pedometers was downloaded once in three weeks. At the end of three months, participants completed the BRFSS physical activity tool and a post-intervention body weight measure was taken.

A total of 44 of the 56 women (78.6%) who were eligible participated in the study. The mean age was 52.5 ± 7.7 years; 20.5% were African American, 75% were White, and 2.3% were Hispanic. A majority of women (63.6%) were employed full-time. In terms of chronic disease indicators, 43.2% reported high cholesterol, 31.8% reported high blood pressure, 20.5% were pre-diabetic, and 6.8% had type II diabetes.

At post-intervention, 36 women (81.8%) provided complete data. Using the BRFSS physical activity questionnaire, self-reported activity levels were categorized into no activity, moderate intensity activity less than the recommended guidelines, and meets moderate intensity activity guidelines both at baseline and post-intervention. Even though the results were not statistically significant, there was a trend towards increasing activity levels in participants overall. The results show that 22.2% of the participants reported no activity at baseline as compared to 16.6% at post-intervention.

Half the women met the moderate intensity activity guidelines at post-intervention as compared to 30.6% at baseline. The proportion of women who reported activity less than the moderate intensity activity level decreased from 47.2% at baseline to 33.3% at post-intervention. Of the 36 women, 16 (44.4%) lost weight. The weight loss ranged from 0.2-29.0 lbs.

The results of this pilot intervention were promising and show that using text messages can be used to motivate rural women to increase their walking levels. This intervention affects other health-related behaviors such as diet. In addition, studies should also investigate the long-term effect of texting programs on change in health behaviors.

References


Welcoming the New James Scholar Students

Each year at the Rockford Campus, the James Scholar committee hosts a dinner for the second year medical students who are in the top 25% of their class to introduce them to the James Scholar honors program. At this dinner, students have the opportunity to learn more about this research program, hear from current students who are in the program and meet potential research advisors. Dr. Falsetti, chair of the James Scholar Committee then meets with each student individually to discuss research interests and potential research advisors. The first year of the program is spent developing a research proposal and getting it approved. The students are asked to submit a brief proposal and meet with the committee to determine the feasibility of their studies. The next step is developing a final proposal, which usually goes through a couple of revisions and is presented at a James Scholar committee meeting with student’s advisors in attendance. In 2015, 13 students were eligible for the program and all have submitted their proposals for review by the committee. These students will spend the next two years completing their research projects, which will be presented at conferences, our campus Research Day, as well as to the James Scholar committee. The projects are diverse and exciting!

We would like to share the 2015 projects:

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<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>ADVISOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Opinions and Collaboration among Rockford Leaders to Address Social and Economic Factors of Health</td>
<td>Bob Freidel</td>
<td>Kathleen Kelly, MD, SwedishAmerican Hospital, Rockford, IL; Manorama Khare, PhD, Research Assistant Professor, U of I College of Medicine at Rockford, IL</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Comparison of Invasive Treatments for Atrial Fibrillation</td>
<td>Ivo Genev</td>
<td>Farhad Farokhi, DO, FACC, FHRS, Cardiac Electrophysiology, Rockford Cardiovascular Associates, Rockford, IL</td>
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<td>Outcomes Associated With Arthroscopic-Assisted Acromioclavicular Joint Reconstruction Utilizing TightRope Device with Allograft Augmentation</td>
<td>Christopher James</td>
<td>Scott Trenhaile, MD, Rockford Orthopedic Associates, Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery, U of I College of Medicine at Rockford, IL</td>
</tr>
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<td>Long-Term Outcomes of Patients Receiving Implant-Based Breast Reconstruction Using Meshed vs Unmeshed Alloderm</td>
<td>Christina Kim</td>
<td>Sarah E. Hagarty, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, U of I College of Medicine at Rockford, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Program in Overweight Adolescents in Order to Decrease Risk of Obesity-Related Comorbidities</td>
<td>Noah King</td>
<td>Kim-Doan Katrina Nguyen, MD, Pediatric Gastroenterology: Rockford Memorial Hospital, Rockford, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified In Vitro Fertilization Protocol Using Estradiol in Early Follicular Phase and Minimizing Patient Phlebotomy and Ultrasonography Yields High Pregnancy Rates in Women of Advanced Reproductive Age</td>
<td>Kristen Koniewicz</td>
<td>John Holden, MD, Reproductive Endocrinology SwedishAmerican Hospital, Rockford, IL</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Clinical Comparison of Visual Outcomes of Tecnic Multifocal +2.75 and ReSTOR Multifocal +3.00</td>
<td>Pruthvi Kothari</td>
<td>Mitul R. Vakharia, MD, Ophthalmologist, New Vision Laser Center, Rockford, IL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gut Microbe-Derived Sodium Propionate Regulates Neointimal Hyperplasia Development After Angioplasty</td>
<td>Rohan Kulkarni</td>
<td>Karen Ho, MD, Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, IL</td>
</tr>
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<td>Day One Post-Operative Discharge of Total Shoulder Arthroplasty Patients as a Safe and Cost Effective Method of Care</td>
<td>Leonard Onsen</td>
<td>Rolando Izquierdo, MD, OrthoIllinois, Crystal Lake, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of mTOR, EGFR, c-MET, b-Catenin, and Axin-1 biomarkers and their relationship with Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer</td>
<td>Akash Patel</td>
<td>Neelu Puri, PhD, U of I College of Medicine at Rockford, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effects of Nerve Lesions on Functional Outcomes after Treatment of Proximal Humerus Fractures</td>
<td>Amer Rasheed</td>
<td>Geoffrey Van Thiel, MD, OrthoIllinois, Rockford, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenohumeral Arthritis is a Common Cause of Chronic Shoulder Pain in Adults</td>
<td>Ted Schoenfeldt</td>
<td>Richard Olson, MD, OrthoIllinois, Rockford, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Qualitative Analysis of Barriers to Healthy Living in Rural Stephenson and Carroll Counties, Illinois</td>
<td>Qing Wang</td>
<td>Manorama Khare, PhD, Research Assistant Professor, U of I College of Medicine at Rockford, IL</td>
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</table>

If you are interested in serving as a research advisor for a student in the James Scholar Program, please contact Dr. Sherry Falsetti. We will be hosting the next James Scholar informational dinner for the incoming second year medical student class in August 2016.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Jillian Kaskavage, MD

Dr. Kaskavage is a pediatrician at Rockford Health Systems and a clinical assistant professor at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford. She graduated from the College of Medicine at Rockford in 2012 and was a James Scholar student. She completed a pediatrics residency at the Johns Hopkins Children’s Center, Baltimore, MD.

Talking about her experience during her residency, Dr. Kaskavage said she has exposure to a diverse range of patients coming to Johns Hopkins from all over the world for specialized pediatrics care. At the same time, she also served patients from poor, underserved neighborhoods of Baltimore, many of whom were victims of physical and sexual abuse.

After her residency, Dr. Kaskavage returned to Rockford in July, 2015 to work as a pediatrician at Rockford Health Systems’ main clinic on Rockton Avenue, providing full-time out-patient care. In transitioning to being the primary provider for her patients, she has realized that, “one is never done learning or training” and that she still has several colleagues that she can consult to get different perspectives on her cases.

As a James Scholar student, she says her experience helped her understand what it takes to conduct research. The experience of doing a research project from start to finish allowed her to make knowledgeable choices on research projects to get involved in during her residency. It helped her critically evaluate literature and understand the statistics presented in the literature. Most importantly, she feels that being a James Scholar contributed significantly to her being placed for a residency at one of the most prestigious institutions in the U.S.

In her new role at both the College of Medicine and Rockford Health Systems, Dr. Kaskavage intends to mentor nurse practitioners and medical students. In addition, she would like to work with James Scholar students.

Her advice for current medical and James Scholar students is, “Take advantage of the knowledge and resources offered to you in the process of doing your project. The experience of being a James Scholar will be immensely rewarding to the rest of your professional life.”
University of Illinois Rockford
21st Annual Research Day
Wednesday, April 13, 2016
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Research Day is a forum to highlight research conducted at the University of Illinois Rockford campus, and researchers from affiliated and regional institutions.

9:15
Welcome
Chair of Research Committee and Dean of College of Medicine

9:30-10:30
Keynote Address
Mayor Larry Morrissey

11:00
Panel Discussion
Childhood Obesity

12:30-2:00
Poster Viewing and Lunch

2:15
Student Presentations

3:45
Student Awards

4:30
Closing Remarks

MODERATOR
Dr. Sandra Martell, Public Health Administrator, Winnebago County Health Department

PANEL MEMBERS
Dr. Jamie Chriqui, UIC – National, state and school district obesity policy research

Dr. Eduardo Bustamante, UIC – Evidence-based community based physical activity interventions to improve physical and mental health

Dr. Katrina Nguyen, Rockford Health Systems – Evidence-based interventions for overweight and obese children

Patti Nelligan, MS, RN, Peppy Up Program, Rockford Public Schools – interventions for 3rd-5th graders to prevent diabetes and obesity
The Stephenson County Health Department (SCHD) located in Freeport, IL, serves a population of 47,711 according to the 2010 Census. The public health administrator for the department, Craig Beintema, has been serving in this position since 2004. SCHD provides a wide range of services including WIC, Maternal and Child Health (Family Case Management, AOK, Teen Parent Services, APORS), Environmental Health, Lead, Communicable Disease, Immunizations, Health Education, Bioterrorism, Well Woman (women’s health programs), and IPLAN. Mr. Beintema also serves as the registrar of births and deaths for Stephenson County.

In the past decade, Stephenson County Health Department has contracted with Health Systems Research (HSR), a unit of the division of health policy and social science research to conduct their Healthy Community Needs Assessments in 2004, 2009, and 2014. HSR provided comprehensive data about the demographic, social, economic, housing, and health indicators of local residents. Changes in these indicators over time were analyzed as well as compared to the state and national data to identify top health problems. Similar data was provided for Carroll County in 2013. In 2009 and 2010, SCHD contracted with HSR to conduct a planning study that assessed the feasibility of a federally qualified health center (FQHC) to serve Stephenson and Carroll Counties. This study included a household survey, key informant interviews, focus groups, data analysis, and preparation of a New Access Point application.

In 2015, SCHD was funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for a rural health outreach grant to address chronic disease and obesity in Stephenson and Carroll Counties. This 3-year grant is a collaboration between Drs. Khare and MacDowell from the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford (UICOMR), SCHD, CCHD, and Freeport Health Network. The overall goal of this project, “Win With Wellness” is to promote healthy lifestyles using an evidence-based, multi-level program to reduce obesity and chronic disease risk for adult men and women living in rural Stephenson and Carroll Counties in Illinois.

Win With Wellness uses three strategies set in the context of the socio-ecological model to achieve the overall goal:

- The individual level intervention uses the evidence-based TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly) program at community locations such as churches and at small and medium sized worksites;
- The community level intervention will involve conducting community-based presentations at local libraries, church groups, and health events to increase awareness about obesity and chronic disease risk using a previously developed and tested curriculum Heart-to-Heart;
- The system level intervention will include implementing a broad-based media campaign including local newspaper ads, billboards, radio spots, mass-mailings of refrigerator magnets, printed materials, and a social media campaign targeting all residents in Stephenson and Carroll Counties.

When we asked Craig about his experience working with HSR and the UICOMR he said, “They have been wonderful to work with on both a personal and professional level. We have worked as a team since the inception of this project. We hope to continue to work on many future projects.”
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.

(continued)
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
mkhare1@uic.edu

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 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
mbunyer@uic.edu

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
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.
Recent Publications and Presentations from HPSSR Researchers

PRESENTATIONS


Lischwe, Deborah G. and Quackenbush, Debra. County Health Department Community Partners and Medical School Research Unit Use Four Different Methodologies to Measure Local Children's Oral Health Needs. American Public Health Association 143rd Annual Meeting, November 2015.


Lischwe, Deborah G. Hanover Township Community Analysis: Data about Mental Health, Substance Use, Developmental and Selected Demographics. Hanover Township Mental Health Board. September 22, 2015.

Lischwe, Deborah G. Rockford Park District Citizen Survey Results 2015 with Historical Comparisons. Rockford Park District Commissioners Board Meeting and All-Staff Meeting, August 20, 2015 and September 5, 2015.