

Meet the 2009 AHRI Fellows!

In our second year of awarding financial fellowships the research committee enjoyed an increasing number of applicants that responded to the RFP. Our congratulations to the final two recipients, **Martha Acosta, PhD, PT, MS, GCS** from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas and **Patricia Pohl, PhD** from the University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City, Kansas.

Martha Acosta, PhD, PT, MS, GCS

Martha is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. She has enjoyed a teaching career that began at Charity Hospital as a Clinical Instructor and progressed to Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at El Paso, Department of Physical Therapy before moving to San Antonio. Along with multiple presentations and publications, Martha, using her Geriatric Clinical Specialist Certification, has been appointed by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialist for another two year term, charged with writing items for the National Geriatric Board examinations.

Abstract of Martha's Project

Title of Project: Health Service Demographics and Service Utilization Among the "OLDER OLD"

Older adults are a heterogeneous group in terms of their physical and metabolic conditions. The term "frail" has been used to characterize the weakest and most vulnerable older adults. Healthcare clinicians, including physical therapists, provide a wide span of treatment interventions to frail elders. The diversity of clinical approaches to frailty-related problems reflects the multiplicity of functional impairments often seen in these patients. Patients are often referred to in-patient rehabilitation programs or skilled nursing facilities to be treated for physical and physiological problems. The focus of the proposed study is to examine factors associated with frail elders referred to in-patient rehabilitation facilities and skilled nursing facilities. Analysis and interpretation of data including baseline demographics, referral sources and diagnoses, lengths-of-stay, functional levels and discharge disposition, will assist clinicians and managers in strategic planning of services. Monitoring and tracking this information will facilitate decision-making as it applies to service delivery, goal-setting, fiscal management of patient care, and health professions primary and secondary education. This is particularly meaningful as the fastest growing cohort in the U.S. is the group 85 years and older. Decisions that are insightful and well-planned are paramount when striving to deliver quality patient care. Results of this study will address issues along the continuum of care for this population.

Patricia Pohl, PhD

Patricia Pohl is an Associate Professor of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Service at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Patricia has a Masters degree in education and physical therapy with a PhD in Biokinesiology. Awarded multiple grants for stroke and Alzheimers disease, Patricia has served as an Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California and Childrens' Hospital/Chapman University and Associate Professor at University of Florida.

Abstract of Patricia's Project

Title of Project: The Influence of Gender and Marital Status on Outcomes and Placement Following Stroke

Stroke is the leading cause of disability in the United States. Billions of dollars are devoted to rehabilitation efforts for this population, with patient goals of increasing functional abilities and returning to home. There is evidence that women may not benefit from these services as much as men. The purpose of this project is to identify predictors that influence outcomes and discharge placement after stroke, and to determine if these predictors differ for men and women. The use of the data bases from RehabCare and HealthSouth, provided by the Allied Health Research Institute, will allow us to develop prediction models for adults post-stroke admitted to a sub-acute facility. We anticipate that women will have lower functional status at discharge than men, and will be placed in lower resource utilization groups, suggesting that they receive less treatment time. We also anticipate that women will be more likely to be discharged to long-term care facilities, particularly women who are single. The results of this study will provide clinicians and researchers with insight into possible gender differences in stroke-related care, opening the door for change and improvement in the delivery of allied health services.