

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH  
GERONTOLOGY CENTER  
MASTER'S THESES AND PROJECTS

**THE EFFECT OF PETS ON SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT OVER A TWO YEAR PERIOD**

Vicki Bernstein

*Thesis Defense Date: May 30, 1995*

The purpose of this paper was to examine the effect of pet ownership on bereavement outcomes over a two-year period. One hundred and ninety-two individuals age 50 to 93 were divided into categories and type of pet ownership and were interviewed six times during two years of bereavement. Questionnaires were completed which measured bereavement outcomes (perceived stress, perceived coping, depression and loneliness). Respondent-generated responses to pet helpfulness were also measured. Findings indicate that pet ownership does not seem to affect bereavement outcomes over time. Loneliness was the response given most frequently in all pet categories to the question "What has been the single greatest problem for you related to the death of your spouse?" When compared to mixed species owners, dog owners had significantly higher stress levels at Time 1. Compared to cat owners, dog owners were significantly more depressed than cat owners at Time 5. Dog owners had decreased depression levels over time. Cat owners had higher perceived coping ability over the last 6 months of bereavement. A majority of pet owners reported that their pets helped them through the bereavement process because of the companionship they provided. The findings of this study suggest that the role of pet ownership in bereavement is complex and extensive research that examines pet ownership over the life course is needed to best understand this phenomenon.

Committee Members: Chair, Michael S. Caserta, Dale A. Lund, Julia Kleinschmidt

**THE IMPACT OF CAREGIVING BURDEN ON CAREGIVERS' ANXIETY ABOUT AGING \***

Karla Grimwood (Wullschleger)

*Thesis Defense Date: June 2, 1995*

This study examined the relationship between caregiving burden and the caregivers' anxiety about their own aging. Other related sociodemographic, social, and social support factors were also examined. The 894 respondents in this research were identified from the mailing lists of fifty support groups for caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease from sixteen states. The data were collected from mailed, self-report questionnaires. Only caregiver burden, relationship to care receiver, and satisfaction with support were statistically significant in their association with anxiety about aging. When these variables were placed in a step-wise regression analysis, however, only caregiver burden had a significant influence on anxiety about aging explaining 32% of the variance. Caregivers who experience high levels of burden were likely to have the most anxiety about their aging.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, Scott D. Wright

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**A STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF LONG-TERM CARE ADMINISTRATORS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF NEEDED COMPETENCIES**

Floyd Autin

*Thesis Defense Date: December 11, 1995*

The educational preparation that long-term care (LTC) administrators have received is thought to influence their professional socialization. This process influences the perceptions of LTC administrators, which then influences their actions. The question raised by this research was as follows: "Does the advanced education preparation of currently licensed LTC administrators in the state of Utah significantly affect their perceptions of what are important competencies for future LTC administrators?" A questionnaire was mailed to 315 LTC administrators licensed in Utah. The results indicated no significant difference in the mean scores between those administrators with baccalaureate or higher degrees and those with less than a baccalaureate degree. Both groups perceived leadership to be the most important competency needed by LTC administrators. Knowledge of trends in health care and quality assurance was the second and third most important competencies indicated needed by both groups. No significant correlations were found between category scores of perceived importance and number of years as a licensed LTC administrator.

Committee Members: Chair, Mary Ann Johnson, Dale A. Lund, Robert Huefner

**LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS PERSONS WITH HIV/AIDS IN THE SALT LAKE METROPOLITAN AREA \***

Marjean Drost

*Project Defense Date: May 10, 1996*

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic is affecting individuals of all ages in the United States. Despite the increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS issues in the U.S. there has been a lack of research examining the knowledge levels about and attitudes of older adults towards persons with HIV/AIDS. The purpose of this research project was to examine the level of knowledge and attitudes in a sample of older adults aged 55 and older in the Salt Lake Metropolitan area. A self-administered, 34-item questionnaire was completed by 110 older adults with an average age of 73 and the large majority being female (80%). Collectively, the older adults in this sample were knowledgeable about issues concerning HIV/AIDS, however, a substantial proportion of older adults (30%) provided incorrect responses to several questions regarding the *mechanisms for the transmission* of HIV/AIDS. There

was only one significant difference in accuracy of knowledge between males and females which indicated that men were more likely than women to incorrectly respond to the statement "You can get HIV/AIDS from using the same restroom facility as an infected person". On 4 of the 17 knowledge items, *chronological age* was related to knowledge levels with the youngest respondents the most accurate in their knowledge. Education levels were also associated with 4 of the 17 items with those having lower education levels being inaccurate in their knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The respondent's attitudes showed an increasing level of tolerance for persons with HIV/AIDS as their physical proximity and relationships became closer to them. They were least tolerant of "just someone" and more tolerant of neighbors and most tolerant of relatives. In general, the findings suggest the need to increase educational opportunities regarding health issues of HIV/AIDS for older adults and specifically dissemination of accurate information regarding transmission of HIV/AIDS in humans for older adults.

Committee Members: Chair, Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta

\*Published in, Gerontology & Geriatrics Education in, 1998, Vol. 18(4)

## **CREATING A SUCCESSFUL ELDERHOSTEL PROGRAM: A SOCIAL GERONTOLOGIST'S PERSPECTIVE**

Christie Antezak

*Project Defense Date: June 6, 1996*

The coming century will bring many changes to the field of adult education. The Elderhostel program is trying to assist seniors in using their leisure time to learn more about themselves and the world around them. This paper provides a description and critical examination of the Elderhostel Program on a national level with the intent to identify essential components for a successful program from a gerontologist's perspective. A successful program incorporates the following factors: (1) uniqueness of program, (2) geographic location, (3) subject/courses, (4) facilities and accommodations, (5) lifestyle marketing techniques, and (6) appropriate theory. Four main gerontology theories are discussed; activity, continuity, age stratification, and symbolic interaction. Theory provides administrators with a strong foundation that assists organizations in meeting goals. The ideal program created by the author takes advantage of the wealth of resources that are available in each local area and focuses marketing and program efforts on local commuters.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, Scott D. Wright

## **UTAH'S MEDICAID MORATORIUM LIMITING CERTIFICATION OF NURSING HOME BEDS**

Dennis McFall

*Project Defense Date: November 25, 1996*

Following the expiration of Certificate of Need in 1984, the State of Utah experienced uncontrolled growth in the number of nursing home beds being constructed. This growth placed a strain on the state's finances, exposed providers of long term care services to potential financial harm because of the Medicaid reimbursement formula being utilized, and had a negative effect on the quality of long term nursing home care. In an attempt to rectify this situation, the Utah Department of Health, in 1989, adopted and implemented a formal Moratorium prohibiting any further Medicaid certification of nursing home beds in Utah. This project addresses the following questions: **a.** Is the Medicaid Moratorium continuing to serve the primary purpose for which it was created? **b.** Is the existence of the Moratorium causing any difficulty in accessing needed care due to a chronic shortage of beds in any community or catchment area? **c.** Is there any indication that a community is experiencing unfair pricing policies for private paying patients due to the protection from competition afforded current nursing home providers by the Medicaid Moratorium? **d.** Should the Utah Department of Health undertake formal study, collect additional data, and hold public hearings to determine if the Moratorium should be repealed? This study included, but was not limited to, a review of occupancy statistics, private and Medicaid reimbursement rates, and construction data. Available data suggest the Moratorium has limited, but not eliminated, construction of beds in this state. Under the Moratorium currently certified providers are allowed to expand facility size at an existing site. Many have chosen to do so. Still there are areas of the state which do not have ready access to nursing home beds. Individuals in these locations are often faced with placement in facilities 50 to 100 miles from their home. Although access to a nursing home close to ones' personal residence may be difficult, there are adequate bed numbers available throughout the state. No evidence was found indicating unfair pricing policies. In-home services are available, in varying degrees, throughout the state. In some areas however, alternatives to institutional care are not fully utilized. A greater understanding of these programs is necessary. In summary, further study is needed before any recommendation to abandon the Moratorium is warranted. Potential nursing home residents, providers of care, local and state officials, and professional gerontologists, should all have an opportunity to evaluate, assist in the development of, and comment upon a long-range plan for long term care. Careful evaluation of what is currently available, projected needs, future direction, cost implications, alternative delivery systems, and effect on the elderly population should be undertaken by the Utah Department of Health, in cooperation with other interested agencies and parties, to chart a course for what lies ahead.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, Scott D. Wright

## **GENDER AND THE CAREGIVER BURDEN INVENTORY: EXPLORING SPECIFIC CAREGIVER BURDENS**

Ellen Cox Bush

*Thesis Defense Date: December 5, 1996*

The purpose of this study is to explore each item of the multidimensional Caregiver Burden Inventory (CBI) for mean score gender

differences. The study proposes that social role theory offers a basis for understanding how the burden experienced by men and women caregivers may differ due to gender socialization, and that gender differences within items of the CBI contribute to the understanding of unique profiles of burden experienced by family caregivers. The study sample consists of 160 caregivers recruited from adult day care centers ( $n=52$ ) and from mailing lists of caregiver support groups ( $n=108$ ). Eighty-two percent of the respondents are women with an average age of 62.5 years ( $SD=13.3$ ). Eighty-six percent are married with 52% being spouses of the care recipient. Thirty-seven percent are either daughters or daughters-in-law. The average time providing care is 4.6 years. The CBI consists of 5 subscales measuring time-dependence, developmental, physical, social, and emotional burden. Of the twenty-four CBI items, four exhibit gender differences when the means for men and women caregivers are compared using a t-test. On all four of these items, women report higher burden scores. A pattern of experience for burdened caregivers emerges including issues of preparation for caregiving and the nature of the caregiving relationship. Gender remains a significant influence on burden in three of the four items after regression analyses are conducted. For the burden item I'm physically tired, gender ( $Beta=.19$ ) remains an important influence. Together with other factors, 32% of the variance on this item is explained. Forty-two percent of the variance for the item I resent my care receiver is explained by gender and other independent variables. The item Caregiving has made me physically sick, shows no significant influence due to gender, the 20% explained variance being attributed to the physical health of the caregiver ( $Beta=.29$ ). Interestingly, 15% of the variance for the burden item I feel ashamed of my care receiver, is explained by gender alone ( $Beta=.17$ ). Shame seems to be a gender driven, emotional response to an overwhelming caregiving experience. A discussion of shame as a significant issue in caregiver burden is included.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, Scott D. Wright

## **LIFELONG PERSONALITY TRAITS AND INTERESTS OF ALZHEIMER'S PATIENTS AND THEIR RESPONSES TO VIDEO RESPITE**

Karen M. Steiner

*Project Defense Date: December 10, 1996*

The effect of lifelong personality traits and interests of persons with Alzheimer's disease (AD) on their participation in certain activities offered in long-term care (LTC) facilities is not well documented. In this study, family caregivers of 11 institutionalized AD patients rated selected premorbid personality traits of their impaired relatives and provided information on their past interests and preferences. The caregivers also predicted the responsiveness and attention of their relatives to Video Respite™ (VR), a videotape application designed primarily to capture and maintain the attention of cognitively impaired individuals. Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients indicated that responsiveness to VR was not significantly correlated with either premorbid personality traits or prior interests as reported by the family caregivers. In addition, caregivers, regardless of the perceived closeness of their relationship to the AD patient, were unable to accurately predict their relatives' responsiveness to certain content areas of the videotape. Although additional research is warranted, the findings of this exploratory study suggest that responsiveness to a sensory stimulus such as VR may depend more heavily on contextual and environmental factors than on premorbid personality traits or prior interests and preferences.

Committee Members: Chair, Michael S. Caserta, Dale A. Lund, Scott D. Wright

## **DESIGN FOR A WORKSHOP TO TRAIN PHYSICAL THERAPY AIDES TO WORK WITH GERIATRIC PATIENTS IN LONG-TERM CARE SETTINGS**

Marilyn Morris

*Project Defense Date: May 23, 1997*

Physical therapy aides are being used for rehabilitation services in increasing numbers as a result of managed care programs and a need to reduce health care costs. In addition, the growing numbers of the frail elderly population have increased the need for rehabilitation services. However, physical therapy aides are not consistently trained or properly prepared for the job they are expected to perform. Thus, the goal of this research project was to *design a training workshop to educate physical therapy aides with a minimum level of knowledge needed for working with geriatric patients in long-term care settings*. Chapter I examines the history and background regarding the use of physical therapy aides. Chapter II discusses the national regulatory policy of the American Physical Therapy Association, as well as the legal statutes in Utah regarding current use of physical therapy aides in the physical therapy profession. Chapter III proposes the rationale for the project, which is based on the literature review, legal implications, and demographics of the elderly population. Chapter IV provides an overview of the training program, including educational aims, prerequisites for participants, topics to be included, budgetary considerations, instructor's qualifications, location and format of the workshop, and sequence of topics. All participants in the workshop will have obtained their certified nursing assistant (CNA) and will have some physical therapy experience. Therefore, it is assumed that they will have an understanding of basic health care procedures and physical therapy techniques and practices. However, because of the diversity of educational levels that might be characteristic of the health care associates taking the course, the course content will be very basic and uncomplicated by technical jargon, which might be too difficult for some attendees to understand. It should be noted, however, that the majority of physical therapy aides are college students or college graduates who are attempting to gain experience in order to improve their chance of being accepted into physical therapy or physical therapist assistant school. They are usually very interested in learning about physical therapy, and their educational levels and socioeconomic levels are likely to be higher than the average CNA working in long-term care. In most facilities, becoming a physical therapy aide is considered a promotion for the CNA who has been an outstanding and responsible employee in patient care. Therefore, CNAs who work in the physical therapy department have been selected for their skills that typically transcend the minimum expertise of the CNA. Because of physical therapy aides' interest in the physical

therapy profession, they are usually more highly motivated to learn and remain on the job. Chapter V addresses adult education principles and methods of instruction to maximize adult learning for this workshop. These principles and methods were used in designing the methods of instruction for each training session. Each topic is discussed in Chapter VI, with objectives, time allotted, content, methods of instruction, and materials to be used specified for each session. Footnotes were used to identify the sources from which the material for each part of the course content should be extracted. In this way, instructors and participants will be able to find the actual material; thus, the course information will be more consistent. A suggested schedule is provided to demonstrate that the course can be held and completed over a 3-day period. An examination is included in Chapter VII of the proposed workshop to test knowledge and competency (based on the objectives of the workshop); it includes short-answer and practical-test sections. The Appendix provides answers to the examination. Individual facilities will be able to determine whether or not they want to provide a certificate or other indicator of completion to verify that participants have satisfactorily mastered the information provided in the training workshop. This workshop does not claim to prepare physical therapy aides for all geriatric knowledge areas in physical therapy, but it does provide a substantial foundation for increased consistency and more standard training in the domain of long-term care settings.

Committee Members: Chair, Scott D. Wright, Michael S. Caserta, Merry Jurelich

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND THE OLDER ADULT: ASSESSING THE STATUS OF EXERCISE PROGRAMS IN SALT LAKE COUNTY SENIOR CENTERS**

Joi T. Rigby (Matsukawa)

*Project Defense Date: September 25, 1997*

The quantity of human life has been increased; it is now time to focus on increasing the quality of those added years. More than 80% of older adults in the United States suffer from at least one chronic disease. Physical activity has been shown to decrease the incidence of many chronic diseases, yet the majority of older adults remain sedentary. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) can be used to help exercise leaders to create exercise programs tailored to meet the specific needs of older adult exercisers. This project provides research and analysis of exercise programs, and resources available to promote exercise as an intervention or prevention of chronic diseases.

Committee Members: Chair, Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Hester Henderson

## **PREPARING THE SALT LAKE COUNTY OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: USING MODERN TECHNOLOGIES TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS**

Paula Warner Johnson (Jorgenson)

*Project Defense Date: October 22, 1997*

Utah, as well as the nation, is experiencing dramatic growth in the number of elderly persons. Although many of today's seniors are healthier and more affluent than previous generations, many are also at risk because of limitations in income, health, and lack of connection to available resources. Seniors prefer to remain active and independent in the community rather than be institutionalized. To accomplish this, accurate and appropriate resource information needs to be easily accessible by older persons and their caregivers. In response to the directives of the Older Americans Act that resource information be available, Salt Lake County Aging Services Outreach Program serves as a clearinghouse of information for area seniors ages 60 and above and their caregivers. Outreach personnel rely on the program's manual (or resource directory) as their main source of information to connect seniors and services. They have insufficient employee resources, however, to keep the directory current and to make improvements that will add to the efficiency and effectiveness of completing daily tasks. Volunteers are a crucial part of the Outreach Program. This master's project describes a recent effort to evaluate, update, modify and improve the reference manual as well as to streamline the process and make recommendations for systematic future updates. In the process of completing the project, information has been transferred to a format that will help meet the county's goals of moving into the 21st Century and using advances in technology.

Committee Members: Chair, Michael S. Caserta, Scott D. Wright, Mary Ann Johnson

## **THE EMERGENCE OF A POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE IN GERONTOLOGY**

Layla Knox Ward

*Project Defense Date: May 12, 1998*

There has been a recent surge of interest in historical research as it relates to the social construction and deconstruction of aging, and an increase in critical research that exposes the consequences of the field's preoccupation with extending life--namely a lack of knowledge about or interest in what is involved in expanding life. This project is a synthesis of historical and critical gerontological literature which illustrates the importance of the deconstructive aspect of postmodernism to gerontology, and ignites and informs the paper's discussion on how to steer the field towards postmodernism's generative aspects, specifically as it would relate to the area of intergenerational conflict. This project looks at the epistemological development of aging, using historical transitions as a focal point. Specifically the paper documents the evolution of human lifetime images and images of the aging body beginning with premodern images, as a way of understanding the modern perception of old age and aging. The historical transitions, namely the shift from a premodern to a modern perspective, and then the emergence of a postmodern perspective, are used as a thread or theme to show perceptual change. The literature suggests that our modern view of aging is limited because it doesn't allow adequate space for aging diversity, complexities and contingencies. The literature points to a partnership of postmodern thought and critical gerontology as potentially holding the promise of

another paradigm shift. The vision of modernism and postmodernism that is outlined in the project will not be shared by all. Certain aspects are emphasized over others, namely the modern belief in individualism and the postmodern affinity to mutuality, as a way of framing the synthesis of critiques, and because of its applicability to the paper's secondary goal of offering a new approach to what will soon become one of aging most pressing issues, generational tensions and equity debates.

Committee Members: Chair, Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Audrey Thompson

## **THE READINESS AND PERCEIVED NEED FOR LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES BY SENIORS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHERN UTAH**

Joy Cornelius

*Project Defense Date: October 29, 1998*

Informal conversations with approximately 30 seniors in seven Southern Utah senior centers were conducted to obtain information on the readiness of rural elderly for the expansion of long-term care services. The seven communities where seniors were interviewed include Moab, Monticello, Blanding, Orderville, Panguitch, Monroe, and Manti. In addition, six service providers in Moab, Monticello, Richfield, Price and Orderville were consulted on the current service availability and the future direction toward service expansion. It was found that the type of community where a senior lives and whether that person is a native or not often determines the attitude of the senior toward changing the long-term care service availability. Also, certain demographic characteristics, such as growth potential, can indicate whether the addition or maintenance of the number of long-term care services will occur. This study also presents the importance of making the structure of a study flexible and adaptable. Once the first interviews were performed in this study, there was a need to adjust the original format because most seniors left the senior center once lunch was over. Therefore, the interviews went from being formal individual interviews after lunch to informal group interviews during lunch. This proves that when doing a study in a certain area, it is important to find out the cultural characteristics and behaviors that will influence the way that a study is conducted.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Scott Wright, Dennis McFall

## **MANAGING ELDERLY DEPRESSION IN PRIMARY CARE: HOW A MEDICARE HMO MEASURES UP TO AHCPR CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

Carol A. Martin

*Project Defense Date: November 9, 1998*

A secondary data analysis was performed to determine how a Medicare HMO managed elderly depression as compared to depression management guidelines established by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR). The subjects totaling 1958 (28% of the HMO patient population), were selected due to having a medical claims record of a depression diagnosis or a prescription for antidepressants or other psychotropic drugs frequently used for depressive symptoms. Claims records were summarized to produce dichotomous variables for each subject to distinguish those patients who had a specific diagnosis or treatment from those who did not have that same diagnosis or treatment. Diagnosis and treatment variable combinations were used to compare proportions between patient groups and to compare HMO diagnosis/treatment patterns to AHCPR guidelines. Diagnosis and treatment differences were found between primary care physicians and mental health specialists. Pharmacotherapy treatment of depression, in general, was much more consistent with AHCPR guidelines than other reports, but improvements in differential diagnosis of depressive types and employment of optimal treatment protocols for each were indicated.

Committee Members: Chair: Michael S. Caserta, Scott D. Wright, Jill Hoggard-Green

## **FINDING DIRECTION IN THE MEDICAID MAZE: A GUIDE FOR NURSING HOME RESIDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Stacey Knapp (Ward)

*Project Defense Date: November 19, 1998*

The purpose of this project is to facilitate the Medical application process for those who are either entering a nursing home or already in one. Currently there is Medicaid information available in the community, however, much of the information is too complicated for nursing home residents and their families to understand and use. Many times, families see the application and other forms that need to be filled out, and become overwhelmed with the process. There is also information available that people applying for Medicaid do not know exists. In sum, many questions remain unanswered. A handbook has been developed to provide a guide for the medical application, key people who can assist with the application process, asset assessment, copies of applications with accompanying instructions, and a detailed checklist are included in this extensive comprehensive handbook. The goal for this handbook is that it provides information that may be difficult to obtain or understand otherwise. The field of gerontology can make further contributions as a result of this handbook by measuring its helpfulness in assisting the Medicaid applicant or assessing the helpfulness of various Medicaid eligibility workers. Through disseminating this handbook to various agencies (public and private) in the state of Utah, it will continue to be a resource helping hundreds of people as they encounter this complicated financial and psychosocial endeavor.

Committee Members: Chair: Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, A. Kim Dansie

## **EMPLOYING OLDER WORKERS: STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Peter Hebertson

*Project Defense Date: December 1998*

The United States and Utah are currently undergoing the most dramatic demographic shift in recorded history. By the year 2020, the number of people 65+ is expected to double. This explosive age growth will impact every aspect of American society. Utah is also expected to experience an increase in its' aging population. By the year 2020, Utah's 65+ population is expected to double. With increasing costs of living, medical care and housing, many seniors will have to maintain or seek employment to meet their financial obligations. Currently, older workers are not accepted in the workforce. As employers find it more difficult to fill positions and the numbers of older adult's increases, it will become commonplace to find older workers being used in the workforce even though current stereotypes present many obstacles. Many employers do not understand the employee potential of the older worker cohort. The purpose of this master's project was to create an educational presentation about older workers that could be given to Wasatch Front employers by members of the Wasatch Front South Older Workers Advisory Council, as well as others around the state of Utah. The presentation provides employer's information on local and national aging demographics, older adults and their strengths and weaknesses, and how to recruit, hire, train and manage this older cohort. Twenty-six slides are provided to guide the presentation along with a brief description of the major points related to each slide. In addition to the presentation materials, is an annotated bibliography of six useful literature sources.

Committee Members: Chair, Scott D. Wright, Ph.D., Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta

## **ELDER AMERICAN INDIANS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY**

Katharina DuBois

*Project Defense Date: December 5, 1998*

This project focused on the demographics and the service needs of American Indian elders, and their families. Specifically, this project reviewed the literature regarding the following issues: (1) why elders and their families do not utilize services which are available to them; (2) is the lack of utilization due to the lack of needed services, if so why; (3) to gain a better understanding of the targeted group (American Indian elder) and how their geographic location, culture, perceptions, and historical context affect their use, or lack of use, of needed services and programs; and (4) investigations and procedures by which studies and research are done have their limitation. This project described successful aging for the American Indian elder in the 1900s, and examined the traditions, customs, and roles of the American Indian elder, and how history, poverty, diversity, and accessibility and utilization of needed services has either enhanced or jeopardized the American Indian elders role in his/her culture. This project also provided a profile of the American Indian elder on a national, regional and state level; examined the American Indian elder's continuum of care or lack of those services in maintaining the elders independence and dignity; and described the health status of the American Indian elder, and needed interventions in either preventing or reducing the risk in the severity of the disease; and offers knowledge of the Navajo Nation and the Adopt-A-Native Elder Program, and the perceived needs of the American Indian elder at a local site - San Juan County, Utah.

Committee Members: Chair, Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta

## **SERVICE NEEDS, AVAILABILITY, AND SATISFACTION AMONG LESBIANS AGE 40+**

Cynthia Davis

*Project Defense Date: December 10, 1998*

The purpose of this study was to examine perceived needs, the perception of unmet needs, and the level of satisfaction with service providers for lesbians age 40+ in seven life areas from three different locations. The research questions were: "How well do lesbians age 40+ perceive their needs being met in each of seven life areas (medical/healthcare, legal, institutional/housing, spiritual, family, bereavement and emotional, and social)? To what extent are aging lesbians perceptions of met or unmet needs and their level of satisfaction with service providers? Data was obtained through convenience sampling procedures, with a survey developed by the investigator. Sixty-nine respondents were recruited from three cities, Santa Monica, California; Columbus, Ohio; and Salt Lake City, Utah. Lesbians in Salt Lake City were identified through a lesbian support group from the University of Utah's Women's Resource Center. Data from these projects indicates lesbians in Salt Lake City have a fairly high level of satisfaction with services and providers, with their needs being met in most of the seven areas. The sample of lesbians from Santa Monica and Columbus were satisfied with service providers in most areas, except in areas of housing and legal, where the mean scores were below 3.0 (sd=2.01 legal, sd=0.90 housing). The most significant statistical differences between the two groups were found in the life areas of housing, legal, family and medical. In each of these areas the Salt Lake City respondents had consistently higher mean scores, revealing that they believe their needs are being met in those areas more than those in the other group of lesbians from Santa Monica and Columbus. Correlations of the four independent variables (age, geographic location, education, and level of openness) with perceptions of unmet needs in the six life areas showed age was correlated with the emotional/bereavement life area, with the oldest lesbians having greater unmet needs ( $\rho=.24$ ). Age, however, was not associated with unmet needs in any of the other life areas. The degree of openness about sexual orientation also was associated with having unmet needs regarding emotional/bereavement issues. Lesbians who were most open about their sexual orientation had fewer unmet emotional/bereavement needs ( $\rho= -.24$ ). These analyses show that geographic location and education were not predictive of any unmet needs, and age and openness were only associated with emotional issues bring unmet. Overall, these four independent variables were not good predictors of unmet needs.

Committee Members: Chair: Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, Patty Reagan

## **CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO ASSISTED LIVING IN THE WASATCH FRONT: A GERONTOLOGIST'S PERSPECTIVE**

Michael Julian Fender

*Project Defense Date: December 14, 1998*

The field of assisted living is a relatively new component in the continuum of housing and health care for older adults along the Wasatch Front and elsewhere. Assisted living offers a new alternative to older adults who are not comfortable living on their own, but who do not require the services of a skilled nursing facility. This project examines the development of assisted living and identifies the needs of older adults which were not met by other types of services, but that have been addressed by this new concept of care. The project also provides a *Consumers' Guide to Assisted Living in Utah* containing information regarding this housing option and suggests considerations to be taken when choosing a residence. The project concludes with an addendum which presents a gerontologist's recommendation of how assisted living residences could better promote healthy aging among their older adult clientele.

Committee Members: Chair: Dale A. Lund, Dwight Adams, Dennis McFall

## **ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND OTHER DEMENTIAS – TRAINING MANUAL FOR STAFF IN SPECIAL CARE UNITS**

Kyle J. Peacock

*Project Defense Date: December 16, 1998*

Alzheimer's Disease currently affects over 4 million adults, at a cost of care of over \$90 billion annually. As the aging population increases, so will the number of individuals affected with this illness. Current services are inadequate, and health care costs continue to rise. The future will see an increased demand for specialized services relating to the care of individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias. With little or no regulation regarding the implementation of such services, the quality of care remains uncertain. The purpose of this research project was two-fold. First, this project focused on developing a training manual for those staff involved in long term care settings. Second, this manual was also intended to be used by family and caregivers to determine if the prospective specialized services would meet their needs and the needs of their loved ones.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Michael S. Caserta, Anna Dresel

## **SALT LAKE COUNTY SENIOR MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SURVEY**

Merrie Zuconi

*Project Defense Date: December 17, 1998*

The objective of the Senior Medical Transportation Survey was to identify how people sixty years of age and older, living in the Salt Lake County Area were meeting their medical transportation needs. The three-month, non-thesis research project was conducted at ten University Health Network clinics. A total of 124 voluntary participants completed the self administered, standardized 6-item questionnaire. The mean age was 74 years old. Thirty three percent were male and 62 percent were female. Thirty-two valid zip codes were reported by participants. Five survey sites represented 82.2 percent of the return rate. The data suggests that people of the different gerontological categories of young-old (65-74), old-old (75-84) and oldest old (85+) do access transportation differently as advancing age necessitates more dependency on others rather than on oneself. Data was of limited generalizability due to the limited sampling frame. Therefore, chi-square homogeneity tests showed a significant difference among variables may not be valid. Affordable and accessible transportation options that encourage independence and autonomy for the elderly will be important considerations for service providers in the decades ahead. The researcher sincerely hopes that the data generated by this project will be useful in its implications for further empirical study.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Anna Dresel

## **PRESENTING CORPORATE ELDERCARE: HELPING EMPLOYERS ASSIST EMPLOYED CAREGIVERS**

Eve B. Larsen

*Project Defense Date: December 17, 1998*

A presentation on Eldercare was designed first, to encourage employers in providing a comprehensive benefits and programs package to their employees who currently care for elderly dependants. Second, to determine the readiness of a business in Utah to provide Eldercare to those employed caregivers. Third, to learn if a business would be willing to hire a Gerontologist in helping to design a model comprehensive Eldercare package for eligible workers. After careful review of relevant literature, a professional overhead presentation, consisting of thirty-one overheads and a ten page written narrative, was created outlining the various aspects of an aging population and the subsequent issues of caregiving. Main features of the presentation include: The Aging of America, The Caregiving Experience, Needs and responsibilities of a Caregiver, The employed Caregiver, Caregiving and Work, Costs of Caregiving, Eldercare Provisions within the Workplace, Benefits and Disadvantages of Eldercare Provisions, Assessing the Need for Corporate Eldercare, and Taking Action to Provide Corporate Eldercare. This presentation arrangement allows for changes, as demographic and research information adjusts over time. This presentation is effective in its design to integrate the material with the company's mission, vision and values. The presentation could include specific examples of employee caregiving experiences. At the conclusion of the presentation, a participant feedback form was distributed to obtain comments as to the effectiveness of the presentation. The feedback form was additionally intended to give insight

as to the readiness of corporations to provide Eldercare to employees. A redesigned feedback form has been included. The information within this presentation has implication for the development of programs and benefits that are responsive to the tremendous needs of employed caregivers. Gerontologists who are educated in regards to the issues surrounding caregiving can be helpful and needed information source to employers faced with business costs associated with having employees who also care for the elderly. The presentation outline and packet of accompanying materials is available upon written request only. A copyright on this material is currently under consideration.

Committee Members: Chair Dale A. Lund, Marge E. Edwards, Margy M. Campbell

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLINICAL GERONTOLOGY LAB FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY STUDENTS: CURRICULUM STRATEGIES**

Jenny Nelson

*Project Defense Date: April 14, 1999*

This project addresses the need for physical Therapy students to be educated to treat the growing elderly population. The paper first reviews the demographic trends of the health care profession indicating exponential growth in the elderly population. It then outlines a clinical gerontology lab course as an addition to the current University of Utah curriculum. The topics presented in the course are based on the recommendations of the APTA special projects board to be essential to physical therapy practice and were received by the students who participated in the course. The course began with a goal setting exercise which encouraged the students to take some ownership of the lab and help direct the course. As a result there was additional time spent on Medicare and the new payment system. The course was determined to be a valuable asset to the University of Utah curriculum and should be added to the mandatory course work for the Physical Therapy students. Future considerations will be to offer the course to a broader range of gerontology and health care students.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Carolee Moncur, Yvonne Sehy

### **INCREASING SAFE MEDICATION PRACTICES IN OLDER ADULTS: AN ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS & EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS**

Sandra F. Christensen

*Project Defense Date: April 26, 1999*

As the population ages the risk of chronic illness increases, necessitating the acceptance of a long-term medication regimen. Increasing the numbers of daily medications may result in adverse drug reactions, unsafe medication practices, and non-compliance. Non-compliance, which can result in hospitalization, loss of independence, and death, remains an issue in medical, social, and psychology literature. Understanding the variables that contribute to non-compliance, while offering older adults continuing education on safe medication practices, may be a solution. Programs that encourage older adults to diagnose their learning needs and develop the learning climate can increase the feelings of self-efficacy necessary to practice the self-care behavior of medication compliance.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Yvonne Sehy, Kathleen O'Dell

### **PARTICIPATION OF WIDOWED OLDER ADULTS IN A SELF-CARE AND HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM: APPLICATION OF THE THEORY OF REASONED ACTION \***

Sara Jane O Bray (Rice)

*Project Defense date: May 6, 1999*

Decreased morbidity and mortality are just two of the documented outcomes from health promotion activities. Older adults who have recently lost a spouse are potentially at greater risk of compromised health and of becoming more functionally dependent. They can potentially benefit from health promotion programs designed to address these issues. Unfortunately, efforts to attract members of the older population to many established health promotion programs have not been entirely successful. A theoretically guided examination of those factors that could potentially influence participation in health interventions is crucial. The Theory of Reasoned Action is a framework that has proven useful in designing and implementing health promotion programs for a variety of populations. The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) predicts attendance in pathfinders, a self-care and health education program. A group (N=35) of older adults (age 50+) who had been widowed were recruited to participate in a series of weekly classes and asked to complete self-administered questionnaires. The average for the sample was 66.5 (SD=7.9), with a median length of widowhood equivalent to 9 months. They attended an average of 7.5 classes out of the 11. Thirty-three of the 35 participants (94%) were female. Only two factors had a significant correlation to attendance. Those who were more recently widowed and who were married longer prior to widowhood tended to attend more classes. None of the components of the TRA model itself were associated with attendance to the classes. However, attitude toward behavior and normative expectations did correlate to the intention to attend. Future research should attempt to use multiple indicators to measure the TRA components when applied to a health promotion program. Additional work is also clearly needed to more systematically assess those potential unanticipated obstacles to participation in self-care programs that could ultimately benefit participants overall health, well being, and functional independence.

Committee Members: Chair: Michael S. Caserta, Dale A. Lund, Shirley Rossa

\* Published in the American Journal of Health Education, 2001, vol. 32 (4)

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR OLDER ADULTS IN SALT LAKE COUNTY: FILLING THE GAPS**

Erin James Madsen

*Project Defense Date: May 12, 1999*

Interviews with 32 directors of educational programs were conducted to create a description of programs for older adults in Salt Lake County and its surrounding area, and to find aspects in common among programs with high enrollment. Program directors also shared their views on obstacles to the program, successful components of an educational program, the development of new classes, and community support. A historical overview of adult education and the description of older adult education programs in the United States are provided. Programs for older adults in the Salt Lake county area are compared to national offerings. The author identifies resources and needs in Utah program offerings. The categories in which needs are found are: Four-year colleges and universities, Institutes for Learning in Retirement, vocational training, Shepherd's Centers, museums and libraries, OASIS, and intergenerational programs. The need for education among administrators and instructors of older adults is emphasized. Partnerships between programs, policymakers, community leaders and organizations, and older adults are seen as the solution for filling the gaps in older adult educational program offerings in Salt Lake County.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Rosemary Kelland

## **EVALUATING THE CAREGIVER BURDEN INVENTORY (CBI) FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR RESPITE SERVICES**

Kitt C. Curtis

*Project Defense Date: May 25, 1999*

Community resources available to caregivers of adults who are suffering from chronic long-term illnesses are limited. Providing needed intervention through respite services to caregivers can benefit the recipients by easing their caregiving burden. Such assistance can improve the quality of life as well as the physical health of those whom the program serves. Respite services can delay the onset of disease, the possibility of being institutionalized or even premature death. Respite services also benefit the community by providing services to the public while saving a significant amount of tax dollars in preventative care. Because the impact of respite services is so significant, the process by which eligibility for respite services is determined merits critical review. Determining eligibility for respite services in the most efficient manner should ensure that individuals receiving respite benefits will be those who truly have the greatest need for services. Respite resources and services need to be dispersed equitably to caregivers. As part of this project, twenty (20) caregivers were interviewed in their homes. This project reports their responses and discusses the results to determine the appropriateness of the Multidimensional Caregiver Burden Inventory (CBI) and the eligibility process for respite services. By examining the strengths and weaknesses of the CBI, this paper identifies intake and screening limitations of the current system to more accurately determine caregiver burden, and suggests topics that merit future research.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Scott D. Wright, Anna Dresei

## **THE INFLUENCE OF HISTORICAL ROLES OF CAREGIVING ON AFRICAN-AMERICANS TODAY: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

Reginald Allen

*Project Defense Date: July 29, 1999*

This paper examines the historical tradition of African caregiving in African American culture and how this cultural tradition may continue to influence African American Caregivers today. This paper investigates, highlights, and identifies the ways this cultural tradition of caregiving from Africa to America has evolved and the extent to which it continues today. African mutual helping tradition, contemporarily known as caregiving in America, is a prevalent, multidimensional mutual helping tradition among the African American population. This multidimensional approach not only promotes reciprocity, but it also exemplified in the various roles and tasks that African and African American elders performed.

Reciprocity in the exchange of support is often neglected in the caregiving literature although it is considered important in relation to well-being in the general literature on support. One unique aspect of this paper is that African American culture and its ingrained ideology of mutual helping tradition is carefully examined in the context of caregiving. Caregiving needs to be put into a multidimensional paradigm embodying history and culture, of the caregiver's background. The paper provides an explanation of how and why caregiver burden levels, caregiver mastery, traditional caregiving ideologies, and caregiver appraisals might be attributable to differences in the heterogeneous makeup of historical backgrounds and life experiences among racial/ethnic groups, in particular African American caregivers.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Scott D. Wright, Dwight Adams

## **THE PROMISE AND LIMITS OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN UTAH: THE CASE OF HB60**

Claire Mckean-Pett

*Project Defense Date: August 1999*

The concept of lifelong learning—continued learning throughout the complete life span—enjoys mainstream recognition and support in the United States. The challenge facing state funded institutions of higher education is the design, implementation and support of programs

targeting the unique needs and motivations of older learners. This paper reviews the literature regarding the historical and philosophical roots of older adult education in the United States from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It will examine major models of adult education programs. Information regarding the andragogical theory of adult education will be presented as it applies to current program models. The paper will present an in-depth comparison between the older adult education programs offered at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and the University of Utah. Within this context, an extension of the University of Utah's program to create a more complete and integrated lifelong learning model based on the andragogical theory, will be explored.

Committee Members: Chair, Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta

## **EFFECTIVENESS OF VALIDATION THERAPY IN PROMOTING MORE POSITIVE CAREGIVING EXPERIENCES**

Darrin Buckner

*Project Defense Date: May 2, 2000*

The overall purpose of this project was to test the effectiveness of a very promising communication strategy for family caregivers to use in their interactions with disoriented loved ones. The strategy, Validation Therapy, created by Naomi Feil, is a communication technique designed primarily to use while interacting with people who are disoriented from Alzheimer's disease or Alzheimer's like dementia. Naomi Feil describes validation as the process of communicating with a disoriented older person by validating and respecting their feelings in whatever time or place is real to them at the time, even though this may not correspond with our "here and now" reality. Validation Therapy classifies disorientation into four stages and offers specific techniques and skills to facilitate communication with each stage. Many professionals' caregivers have had personal accounts of success with Validation Therapy despite the lack of controlled studies determining its effectiveness. This pilot study assesses the effects of Validation Therapy on promoting more positive caregiving experiences for in-home family caregivers. The sample for this pilot study consisted of eight caregivers that attended support groups offered through the Utah chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. Study participants were trained in Validation Therapy during a pre-scheduled support group session and later completed three questionnaires on five separate occasions. Questionnaires measured the effectiveness of the training session, the level of burnout before and after Validation Therapy was used, and the effectiveness of validation Therapy in promoting a more positive caregiving experience.

Committee Members: Chair: Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, A. Kim Dansie

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL AND DECISION MAKING BROCHURE FOR CONSUMERS OF LONG-TERM CARE**

Billy Dietz

*Project Defense Date: May 10, 2000*

The goal of this research project was to develop an educational and decision making brochure for consumers of long-term care services, (e.g., skilled nursing facilities or assisted living facilities). The educational and decision making brochure is specifically designed to assist individuals in care providing situations to understand the differences in the level of care and delivery of care that is offered in skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities. The educational and decision making brochure helps to fill the void for a generic, yet comprehensive, tool for assisting care providers to make decisions based in a preliminary assessment of the most appropriate placement for a family member in a long-term care facility. The research project culminated in developing a brochure for use in a variety of settings (e.g. doctor's offices) and is based on a review of the literature and extensive fieldwork by the author. Copies are available through the University of Utah Gerontology Center.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta

## **DEVELOPMENT OF A CLINICAL GERONTOLOGY CLASS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS**

Valerie Maeker

*Project Defense Date: May 25, 2000*

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the average lifespan was 47 years. In 1993, it was 76 years. Projections indicate that by the year 2050, life expectancy will be at an all-time high of 82.6 years. In 1997, there were 34.2 million people in the United States who were 65 years and older (12.8% of the population). By the year 2030, this number will increase to approximately 70 million people (20% of the population). These demographic changes have had an impact on politics, the economy and various service delivery arenas. One service delivery arena in particular that has been affected is occupational therapy. The number of occupational therapists working with an older clientele has increased as a result of these demographics shifts. In a 1986, 14.8% of occupational therapists specifically worked with adults 65 years of age or older as their primary care population. The percentage increases to 30% in 1991. This trend will likely continue as the population continues to age. Because the aging population is a heterogeneous group that has many complex issues and the increased likelihood that therapists will work with older adults, it is important that occupational therapy schools are educating and training their students to meet the various needs of this population. The purpose of this project was to explore what type and amount of gerontological content currently is being taught in our nation's occupational therapy schools, to demonstrate that few schools have classes specifically devoted to the elderly population, to provide rationale for the need of a clinical gerontology course for occupational therapy students and to propose a detailed description of the makeup of the class. The description of the class includes rationale for topics chosen, format of class with specific objectives for each class, as well as list of class assignments that would be valuable to the students.

Committee Members: Chair: Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, JoAnn Wright

## **CORPORATIONS AND ELDERCARE A SURVEY OF AVAILABLE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN SALT LAKE COUNTY**

Kathleen Verity Haynes

*Project Defense Date: December 7, 2000*

22.4 million households in the U.S. provide care for an older or disabled person. One-third to one half of these people also have full-time jobs. 12% of this group must give up their jobs to become full-time caregivers. Fortunately the enormous cost of caregiving for both the employed caregiver and the employer can be offset by corporate eldercare programs and services. A survey of 21 of the largest corporations in Salt Lake County revealed an emerging awareness of this problem as well as some creative and effective solutions to help employed caregivers find balance in their lives.

Committee Members: Chair, Scott D. Wright, Yvonne Sehy, Margy Campbell

## **PARTICIPATION IN AN EDUCATIONAL SELF-CARE PROGRAM AND EXPOSURE TO NEW RESOURCES DURING BEREAVEMENT: AN EXPLORATORY AND DESCRIPTIVE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PATHFINDERS PROGRAM**

Michele Hornby

*Project Defense Date: January 4, 2001*

Spousal bereavement is a stressful, grief filled period of transition occurring usually in later life. Research has shown one must be capable of assuming the tasks of the deceased spouse in order to have restored well being. This research examines the data of 84 participants in the *Pathfinders* Program, an educational self-care program for recently widowed persons offered through the Gerontology Center of the University of Utah and funded as a three-year demonstration project by the Ben B. and Iris M. Margolis Foundation. This study analyzed the effects of new knowledge, access to new resources, and social and intellectual stimulation during bereavement and active grief work. Findings showed increased knowledge of grief work and being associated with others also experiencing bereavement helped participants understand their own feelings. New knowledge, stimulation, and access to new resources assisted in making the transition to a new self identify as a single person less overwhelming. Results indicated the participants were applying new concepts and skills acquired in the program two and four months later. The participants' comments were analyzed as to whether their experience during bereavement supported the dual-process model of coping with bereavement by Stroebe and Schut (1999). Recommendation was made to include personal growth within future models of bereavement.

Committee Members: Chair: Michael S. Caserta, Dale A. Lund, Yvonne Sehy

## **AGING IN A NEW PLACE: VOICES OF MIDDLE AND LATER LIFE BOSNIAN REFUGEES IN UTAH**

Gail Towsley

*Project Defense Date: April 19, 2001*

The purpose of this study was to examine the migration and aging experiences of middle and later life Bosnian refugees. The long-term aim of this study was to gain greater knowledge about Bosnian refugees, in order to provide cultural insight for policy makers and aging service providers. A sample of 12 Bosnian refugees comprised two-cohort groups (ages 40 to 55 and 65 to 78 respectively). A semi-structured interview was employed and guided by research questions concerning Bosnian refugees personal and migration histories, social support networks, and perceptions of their future and aging. Nine of the 12 interviews were conducted using a translator. Transcribed interviews served as the data that was coded according to the research questions and categories that emerged. Focus group sessions were conducted to validate interpretations from the interviews. Personal narratives reflected the hardships associated with the war in Bosnia, where their towns were invaded and lives were threatened forcing them to flee. Paths of migration often included fleeing to multiple countries before attaining refugee status in the U.S. Two themes, survival and adapting, emerged from the data. Survival described the patterns of how middle and later life cohorts coped in the U.S. by learning English and working, even if in unskilled and low wage jobs. At this stage, individuals hesitated to plan for the future or have long term goals. Adapting described the actions that participants were beginning to explore in order to improve their lives in the U.S. Participant oral histories reflected that their migration experiences resulted in severe changes in social roles, family relationships, and expectations. Implications from study findings suggest that incorporating English as Second Language classes into volunteer and intergenerational programs as well as in refugee concentrated apartment complexes and workplaces, may be beneficial to the adaptation and integration of Bosnian refugees.

Committee Members: Chair: Michael S. Caserta, Scott D. Wright, Sonia Salari

## **DESIGN FOR DEVELOPING AN INNOVATIVE ADULT DAY CENTER PROGRAM IN THE METRO SALT LAKE CITY AREA**

Corey Fairholm

*Project Defense Date: April 25, 2001*

The purpose of this project was to develop an innovative adult day center model. The proposed center will combine the features of an adult day center, health and wellness education and a senior center. Choices of activities will be given to each individual client. When an

individual is treated like an adult, given choices in their lives, they tend to respond more >positively. Erik Erikson's psychosocial model shows that the developmental stages of personality are affected by the social environment. Individuals do make choices regarding the responses to; common lives changes. Erikson focused on the eight stages of development of the ego throughout life, with the final stage occurring in mature adulthood. In his book, The Life Cycle Completed, Erikson and his wife, Joan discuss the stage of Gerotranscendence, involvement vs. withdrawal, in which individuals derive importance and meaning in their lives from a sense of accomplishment. Life satisfaction, or the feeling that life is worth living, may be achieved through tasks in one's life, accepting one's mortality, sharing experiences with the younger generation and leaving a legacy to future generations. Guided by Erickson's principles, the proposed adult day center will offer opportunities and activities to the clients that help them fulfill their need to be involved, to continue learning, and to foster self-concept and self-esteem. The center will encourage clients to socialize, develop enduring friendships and provide supportive interaction among the staff: clients, families, and the community.

Committee Members: Chair: Michael S Caserta, Scott D. Wright, A. Kim Dansie

## **A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ASSIST LONG-TERM CARE MANAGERS IN RETAINING QUALITY NURSING PERSONNEL**

Tim Sorenson

*Project Defense Date: December 13, 2001*

The purpose of this project is to provide a practical guide for managers in long-term care settings to retain nursing staff. Staffing issues are probably the most important matters concerning maintaining quality care in long-term care settings today. In the present health care environment, issues surrounding staffing ratios will most likely not be solved in the near future due to challenge of resolving differences between the industry and regulators. In addition, staff salaries are not negotiable because of reimbursement levels set by Medicare and Medicaid. Facility management lacks control and is not flexible in adjusting profit margins. Thus, recruitment and retention of staff represents one of the primary variables which managers can attempt to enhance or improve upon. Developing improved strategies to recruit and retain staff may also help to increase the quality of care being provided to residents.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, A. Kim Dansie

## **AN EVALUATION OF STATE AND COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING WEB SITES ([WWW.LESELE.ORG](http://WWW.LESELE.ORG))**

Lesele Rose

*Project Defense Date: April 27, 2001*

The baby boom generation, those people born between 1947 and 1964, is nearing retirement age. As the income producers retire, there is a loss of revenue available to the government. Simultaneously, there is an increased demand upon the government for health and human services. This combination creates an unprecedented strain upon government resources. Government Aging Services are not alone in struggling to meet the needs of the elderly. Younger workers and family members are also recognizing the stress in their own lives as they are faced with the additional responsibility of caring for their elderly loved ones. The Older Americans Act authorized \$1,097, 718,000 in 2002 to be used for support services to the elderly. The need for more services will increase dramatically from the year 2010 through 2050 as the baby boom generation reaches the sunset years of life. Government needs to plan for the additional cost of providing needed services. This research study examines the use of the Internet as a means of providing informational support for the elderly and the people who care for them. The study looked at all two levels of Area Agency on Aging web sites, each state and territory, as well as sixty five of the most populated counties in the United States. The research design was primarily qualitative in nature, using multiple method content analyses to evaluate each web site. The study found that an enormous disparity exists among the web sites of Agencies on Aging. While a few of the agencies utilize the Internet as a resource for the elderly and their caregivers, the majority of agencies severely under-utilize the Web as a medium to provide services. A brief analysis of each site is presented, as well as suggestions for presenting web sites targeted to the elderly and their caregivers. This study reveals the need for further research into the use of the Internet as a resource for America's aging population.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Michael S. Caserta, Anna Dresel

## **THE PRESENT STATUS OF WEB-BASED GERONTOLOGY EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY. DEVELOPMENT OF AN ONLINE COURSE: GERONTOLOGY 2050, AGING: CONCEPTS AND CONTROVERSIES**

Kevin Carlin

*Project Defense Date: April 30, 2001*

The presence of Web-based gerontology courses and programs are growing. This article discusses the number of programs and courses available at colleges and universities in the United States and provides a current database of what is presently available online. The article also discusses the development of an introductory gerontology course at the University of Utah.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott D. Wright, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta

## **RESIDENTS' ABUSE TOWARD NURSING ASSISTANTS IN NURSING HOMES**

Nobu Iizuka

*Project Defense Date: August 1, 2001*

Literature reports that nursing assistants are at high risk of committing abusive behavior against residents in their nursing homes. Nursing assistants are defined as workers who provide 90% of direct care to clients without professional nursing credentials; therefore, some of them tend to be abusers. However, they also tend to be victims of abuse from their residents. This study assumed that abuse in nursing homes does not happen only from nursing assistants to residents, but also happens from residents to nursing assistants. The specific aims of this study were to: (1) identify the types of NA abuse (abuse from residents to nursing assistants) and other occupational conflicts; (2) identify the frequency of NA abuse and other occupational conflicts; and (3) compare nursing assistants who had a lower frequency rate of NA abuse to those who had a higher frequency rate of NA abuse, in order to determine whether or not those two groups differed in their frequency rates for other occupational conflicts, job satisfaction levels, burnout levels, and (RSR) resident-to-staff (nursing assistant) ratio. Nineteen nursing assistants who were selected by random sampling from four nursing homes in Salt Lake City provided data. The most frequently occurring NA abuse type was one of the types of psychological NA abuse, swearing/insulting, whose average frequency per shift (8 hours) for nursing assistants (N = 19) was 1.9 times in this research. Next in order was yelling (1.8 times per shift), followed by grabbing (1.3 times), hitting (1.0 times), pinching (0.9 times), scratching (0.6 times), punching (0.4 times), threatening (0.4 times), sexually harassing (0.4 times), kicking (0.2 times), and pushing (0.1 times). Regarding occupational conflicts, conflict with other nursing assistants was the most frequently reported type (0.7 times per shift). Forty percent of nursing assistants who answered the "source of stress" question (N = 15) regarded conflicts with other nursing assistants as the most serious source of stress, although they experienced NA abuse from their residents much more frequently than occupational conflicts with their co-workers. Nursing assistants who had a higher frequency rate of NA abuse had obvious tendencies in the expected directions that included encountering occupational conflicts more frequently, experiencing less satisfaction in their nursing assistant jobs, feeling more burnout, and working for more residents in their nursing homes. The results of t-tests indicated that nursing assistants who experienced the higher frequency rates of NA abuse had more burnout and worked with higher resident-to-staff ratios than nursing assistants who had lower frequency rates of NA abuse.

Committee Members: Chair: Dale A. Lund, Scott Wright, Anna Dresel

### **SERVICE LEARNING IN GERONTOLOGY: A COORDINATED CURRICULUM MODEL \***

Jacob Murakami

*Project defense Date: December 10, 2001*

The purpose of this project was to develop a model for introducing service-learning to an entire academic gerontology program curriculum. Brief historical backgrounds of service-learning and of gerontology are provided, along with a discussion of the separate but unique role of practicum in the field of gerontology. Service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning. The project builds upon the emerging importance of service-learning in higher education and more specifically the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education's (AGHE) efforts in solidifying intergenerational service-learning's presence in gerontology curricula. The proposed "Coordinated Curriculum Model" centralizes the service-learning components and many of the administrative duties related to service-learning in an academic gerontology curriculum. A knowledgeable service-learning coordinator administers and integrates service-learning for several gerontology courses in a program's curriculum, as opposed to each faculty member administering service-learning in their respective courses.

Committee Members: Chair: Dale A. Lund, Scott Wright, Meg Stephenson

\* Published in Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 2002

### **BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN GERONTOLOGY AND CASE MANAGEMENT: THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKER LICENSE**

Daveen Haws

*Project Defense Date: December 11, 2001*

The need for case managers continues to rise as the number and needs of the elderly are projected to increase. The future of case management lies in its ability to be a cost containment tool by utilizing alternatives, such as less expensive community based programs. Alternatively, the case manager needs to emerge out of the traditional fields of medicine and social work and progress to a more multi-disciplinary field of gerontology. This project suggests a new way of educating traditional Social Service Workers by offering a future course of study that includes the fields of medicine, social work, and gerontology. This project looks at the rationale behind the requirement of having a Social Service Worker license. Finally, this project helps to connect the fields of social work and gerontology by building a bridge between them.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott Wright, Dale Lund, Margy Campbell

### **THE FUTURE OF SENIOR CENTERS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: BABY BOOM OR BUST?**

Shannon Collenburg

*Project Defense Date: March 12, 2002*

The purpose of this project is to examine how the aging of the baby boom generation will affect the role of senior centers in the near future. The scenarios presented will be based on the assumption that the baby boom generation is pioneering a demographic revolution and every aspect of our culture will experience great change. The relevant aspects of this demographic revolution, namely the aging of the population and the influx of the aging baby boom generation, which will be presented as a potential solution, rather than a potential social problem, will serve as a prerequisite to answering the central question, *What is the Fate of Senior Centers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?* In addition, and examination of the challenges and possibilities that baby boom generation will bring to senior centers will be presented along with suggestions for the potential niche that senior center could position themselves to fill within this generation. Through the examination of the research, an example of how a successful campaign should be structured that would reshape the senior center image and enable senior centers to *boom* rather than go *bust*.

Committee Members: Chair: Scott Wright, Michael Caserta, Margy Campbell

## **GENDER ROLE PERCEPTIONS AND WOMEN'S CAREGIVING EXPERIENCES**

Kristjane Nordmeyer

*Thesis Defense Date: September 2002*

Providing care to an aging population is a growing public concern as the percentage and number of elderly persons requiring care continues to increase. Families, in particular women, are responsible for providing care to dependent relatives. This study seeks to understand if and how women's attitudes toward providing uncompensated care have changed following the women's movement. Five younger and five older caregivers were interviewed in order to understand the relationship between gender role identity and the experiences of caregiving. As expected, younger caregivers held less traditional gender roles for women. Qualitatively, caregivers with a stronger feminist gender role identity experienced less satisfaction and slightly more burden in the caregiving role. Although younger caregivers scored slightly higher on burden, there was a qualitative difference in the types of burden experienced between younger and older caregivers. Implications for these findings are discussed in relation to caregiver interventions.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, Yvonne Sehy

## **UNDERSTANDING HOARDING BEHAVIOR AMONG OLDER ADULTS: A CASE STUDY APPROACH\***

Michele Franks

*Thesis Defense Date: February 10, 2003*

Hoarding behavior is an increasing problem among older adults. It creates problems related to personal and public safety, physical health risks and psychological well-being. This exploratory study describes 4 separate hoarding cases in terms of how each case was identified, processed and resolved. Records were obtained from written reports and interviews with representatives of Adult Protective Services, Office of the Public Guardian, and the Salt Lake City Police Department. Two of the cases were single females; one case was a single male and the other case a married couple. All subjects were Caucasian and 61 years old or older.

The findings suggest that hoarding behavior greatly impacts the quality of life for the hoarders. It also costs the community precious resources in terms of time and money spent by agencies and others involved in resolving these cases. It is obvious that more research needs to be done to provide a better understanding of this devastating problem. Methods for earlier identification, intervention and treatment need to be developed in order to deal more effectively with hoarding behavior.

Committee Members: Chair, Dale A. Lund, Michael S. Caserta, Donna Poulton

\* Forthcoming in The Journal of Gerontological Social Work.

## **MULTIPURPOSE SENIOR CENTERS: ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON LIFELONG LEARNING**

Jackie Eaton

*Thesis Defense Date: April 4, 2003*

A comparative ethnography was used to examine the social, physical, and organizational environments influencing lifelong learning opportunities in three multipurpose senior centers. The study included observations spanning 120 hours and 30 participant interviews. Field notes and word-for-word interview transcripts were analyzed for existing learning opportunities, participation levels, environmental fit, and senior leadership roles. Results suggested that centers varied greatly in their ability to maximize *synomorphic relationships*, where the physical environment supported the activities carried out in that space. In one center, when the dining room was used for art class, the flow and concentration levels in the learning environment were compromised. Computers were neglected when they were located in the employee break room of one center, compared to the frequent use in another center with a specifically designed "computer room." Organizational environments were observed to encourage or discourage senior empowerment. One center had a highly visible senior council with participants who made the decisions about learning opportunities and senior instructors for all activities. In contrast, the other centers were observed to have a director-centered philosophy, with a weak or absent senior council, and few opportunities for leadership. Those centers that lacked senior empowerment were characterized by very low participant involvement and resentment was conveyed during interviews. Implications suggest that successful lifelong learning opportunities should emphasize synomorphic environments,

volunteerism, and empowerment for participants.

Committee Members: Dale A. Lund, Scott Wright, Sonia Salari

## **A CASE MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR COMMUNITY-DWELLING OLDER ADULTS AT MODERATE RISK FOR INSTITUTIONALIZATION**

Kristina Kay Atkinson

*Thesis Defense Date: May 1, 2003*

Many gerontologists base their philosophical framework on a philosophy that encapsulates designing and implementing social interventions that enhance opportunities for older adults to build self-esteem, personal control, individual and social involvement, and social action. The older adult population is expected to grow exponentially over the next 50 years, yet the United States does not have the financial resources to sustain this large group with the same services they have for the current cohort. In order to save money and elongate physical health in longevity, preventive measures must become commonplace. New research is indicating a reduction in morbidity, mortality, and long-term institutionalization when seniors at a moderate risk for institutionalization are supported with community resources and case management services while living in the community. Traditionally, older adults could only receive government-sponsored case management when they were high risk and the long-term benefits were fewer. I was asked by a local nonprofit senior service entity to develop a case management program for their use. The nonprofit agency had learned that a subset of the older adult population did not qualify for any services; consequently, the staff was trying to fill the gap. I recommended a program design to LifeCare and other similar nonprofit organizations to meet the needs of older adults living in the community at moderate risk for institutionalization. This program design is fashioned after the Modified Community-based Long-term Care Model and considers key design elements such as funding resources, staffing requirements, and ethical concerns. This program could reshape the lives of seniors, empower them more, and promote healthier and longer-lasting community living with potentially significant cost savings to the United States.

Committee: Michael Caserta, Chair, Scott Wright, Peter Hegbertson

## **THE EFFECTS OF WIDOWHOOD ON DISABLED OLDER WOMEN**

Jacqueline Telonidis

*Thesis Defense Date: October 22, 2003*

This study examined the effects of becoming widowed for older women with pre-existing physical disability. Data from three consecutive interviews from the Women's Health and Aging Study (WHAS) were used to compare depression, quality of life, and functional difficulty for widowed and non-widowed women. The two groups of 24 women were matched by age, disability level, domains of disability, and race. Repeated measures of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) revealed that for both groups: depression scores were low and remained relatively stable and they were satisfied with their quality of life at all three time points (T1 = 0-6 months pre-bereavement, T2 = 0-6 months bereaved, T3 = 6-12 months bereaved) with no significant group by time interaction effects. The two groups were no different on their levels of functional difficulty at T1 and T2 but by T3, surprisingly, the widows reported slightly less difficulty. Overall, the findings show that disabled women who became widows demonstrate a noticeable degree of resiliency and hardiness. *Forthcoming in Omega: Journal of Death & Dying*

Journal of Death & Dying

Committee: Dale A. Lund, PhD, Chair, Michael Caserta, PhD, JoAnn Wright, PhD

## **PATIENT EDUCATION FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS: THE DESIGN OF A PATIENT EDUCATION MANUAL FOR OLDER ADULTS**

Vicki Hall

*Thesis Defense Date: March 22, 2004*

Patient education activities are carried out in a variety of ways, both formal and informal, and involve the entire spectrum of health care professionals. In some professional training programs the role of patient educator is clearly emphasized, while in other fields the clinician does not identify with this role. Many health care professionals are well prepared for the technical aspects of their work but are inadequately prepared to provide patient education. In addition, many health care workers lack specific knowledge related to the needs of older adults. The purpose of this paper is to disclose some of the barriers to learning faced by older adults and to present teaching methods that address those barriers as well as the learning needs of older adults. A patient education manual for health care professionals working with older adults that addresses these principles is presented as an appendix to this paper.

Committee: Michael Caserta, PhD, Chair, JoAnne Wright, PhD, Rebecca Burrage, MSN, RN

## **DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE HIV/AIDS EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR OLDER ADULTS: ASSESSING THE READINESS OF POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS, AND FEATURES OF AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

Golnush Sharafsaleh

*Thesis Defense Date: April 22, 2004*

Currently 10-15% of the HIV/AIDS cases in the United States are among older adults who are over the age of 50, and this percentage is expected to increase as people with HIV live longer and become a part of the 50 and older population. Since 1991 there has been a 7% decline in AIDS cases among people under the age of 25, and a 22% increase among those over 50. There is limited research in understanding what kinds of education programs will be most effective in the 50+ population. Unfortunately most current educational strategies are not targeted towards the older segments of the population, nor do we know how responsive older adults are to these educational programs if they were made available. The current study employed a survey to obtain information through a self-administered questionnaire from health care recipients of the University of Utah aged 50 and older in order to better understand the characteristics of this population to participate in HIV/AIDS education programs, and to determine the types of program(s) in which they are willing to participate. It was found that as age increased so did the interest and likelihood of respondents to participate. It was further discovered that individuals were more interested in the topics of HIV/AIDS pertaining to history of the disease rather than prevention strategies. Finally, interested respondents were more willing to receive education through classroom discussion, and small group discussion. Ultimately it was found that there was some level of interest and likelihood of older adults to participate in education programs. Therefore, it is important to create programs that are not only educational but also appealing, so that this population will participate.

Committee: Dale Lund, PhD, Chair, Michael Caserta, PhD, Yvonne Sehy, PhD

## **THE EFFECT OF AN INTERNET AND E-MAIL EDUCATION INTERVENTION ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF SENIOR DEAF ADULTS**

Patricia Felsted

*Thesis Defense Date: May 5, 2004*

The 1990's saw a virtual explosion of technological advancements which now provide the deaf with tools to fully mainstream. Hearing loss, visual impairment, difficulty walking, and chronic pain are only a few of the physical disabilities that make social interaction more difficult for older adults. Many older adults are confronted with social and emotional isolation which is associated with adverse health outcomes and diminished quality of life. One population that is high risk for loneliness and social isolation in their environment is the deaf and hard-of-hearing especially if they lack access or the knowledge to use assistive technological devices. Computers, particularly as they are used to access the internet, can be especially effective assistive devices for older deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. The purpose of this pilot study was to detect and describe any effects of an internet and e-mail education intervention on the psychological well-being, operationalized by loneliness and affect-balance scales, of senior deaf adults. A sample size of 12 volunteers in the intervention group and 8 in the comparison group was obtained for this project. A total of four 90-minute classes were taught weekly by a qualified computer consultant. The instruction included basic computer training to computer use, such as how to log on, manipulation of the mouse, file management, and access to the internet and e-mail. Although there were no statistical significant treatment effects, the project provided valuable anecdotal information about the feasibility of introducing computer technology to deaf and hard-of-hearing adults. Overall, 2 study participants reported that the goals they had set were met by the study experience, and the majority of the participants expressed a desire to learn more.

Committee: Michael Caserta PhD, Chair, Yvonne Sehy, PhD, RN, GNP, Scott Wright, PhD

## **TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-CREDIT PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATE IN GERONTOLOGY**

Janeal H. Atkinson

*Thesis Defense Date: May 27, 2004*

The expected growth of the older adult population both nationally and locally over the next decade has prompted a need for more professionals who are trained in gerontology. Budget restraints and time constraints have directed professionals in need of training toward short term training which is relevant to working with older adult clientele. A national trend towards non-credit certification offers a new opportunity for expanding the offerings of the Gerontology Center. A national and Utah-wide search was conducted to determine the type of classes that are available, their time constraints and cost. The proposed non-credit professional development certificate is based on the outcome of this search, adult education theories, and consultation with the Division of Academic Outreach and Continuing Education at the University of Utah.

Committee: Michael Caserta, PhD, Chair, Scott Wright PhD, Don Kauchak, PhD

## **RURAL SENIOR CENTERS IN UTAH: BUILDING COALITIONS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES**

Nathaniel Robison

*Thesis Defense Date: June 30, 2004*

Between 12,000 to 16,000 senior centers nation wide serve nearly 7 million people age 60 and older each day (Beisgen et al, 2003). With

their overall goal to promote optimal aging with dignity and independence, senior centers have been appointed the focal point in most communities for senior to receive needed social services. For rural senior centers the goal to promote optimal aging is often difficult to achieve. Rural senior centers are often under-funded and under-staffed. In most rural areas senior centers are the only organizations that have programs and resources available to meet the needs of senior citizens. The focus of this project is to help the reader to gain a greater understanding of rural areas, particularly those in Utah. The goal of this project is to form an outline or a template in which rural senior center directors as well and Area Agency on Aging (AAA) directors can use to assess their senior centers as well as their communities to develop a program that is unique to the values and culture of their communities.

Committee: Scott Wright, PhD, Chair, J. Richard Connelly, PhD, Anna Dresel

### **MUSIC THANATOLOGY: PRESCRIPTIVE HARP MUSIC AS PALLIATIVE CARE FOR THE DYING PATIENT**

Lindsay Freeman

*Thesis Defense Date: December 15, 2004*

As the concepts of hospice and palliative care for the dying have gained acceptance in both the medical community and general society, increased opportunities have developed for music therapists to work with patients who are terminally ill. Developed by Therese Schroeder-Sheker, music thanatology is a field whose practitioners provide musical comfort, using harp, at the bedside of patients near the end of life. During these prescriptive "music vigils", the clinician-musician individualizes the music to meet the patient's needs, carefully observing physiological changes and cues, breathing patterns, and synchronizing the music to match the patient. Using data collected from 65 patients, this study was designed to assess the effectiveness of prescriptive harp music on selected palliative care outcomes using a sample of de-identified data forms from past music vigils. Sixty-five patients were administered a 25-95 minute intervention of prescriptive harp music. The two certified music thanatologists collected vital signs (respiration rate, pulse rate and rhythm) before the vigil began (T1) and again following the vigil (T2). Observational indicators (wakefulness, agitation and depth of breath) were also assessed at (T1) and (T2). Results from this study provide evidence that a prescriptive vigil conducted by a trained music thanatologist may have a positive affect on dying patients. Patients were more likely to experience decreased levels of agitation and decreased levels of wakefulness (the patient was in a more restful state), while also being able to breathe more slowly and deeply with less effort. Findings suggest that the health care community as well as family members should consider music thanatology as a form of palliative care for dying patients. Future research in music thanatology is necessary to provide further evidence that supports existing programs or hospices which provide music thanatology as a service and to encourage the establishment of future music thanatology training programs.

Committee: Michael Caserta, PhD, Chair, Dale Lund, PhD, Shirley Rossa, MSW, LCSW

### **FINANCING NURSING HOME CARE IN SALT LAKE COUNTY: WEB SITE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Jeanne Ann Luoma

*Thesis Defense Date: December 15, 2004*

With approximately seven million Americans age 65 and older needing long term care in 2001, nursing home care is a vital health concern in an aging America. Unfortunately, studies show that many older adults, caregivers, and health care providers are unaware of the cost of nursing home care or how to finance that care. The purpose of this project was to create a valuable and accessible resource for older adults, caregivers, and health care providers. After reviewing literature regarding where Americans find health information, it was determined that an informational website about financing nursing home care in Salt Lake County would be a valuable tool. In order to make recommendations for a website, this project consisted of two parts: 1. Identifying options for covering the costs of nursing home care in Salt Lake County and, 2. Recommending effective searching web design including design implications for the 65 and older Internet users. Recommendations were made for a new informational and accessible website on financing nursing home care.

Committee: Yvonne Sehy, PhD, Chair, Ana Dresel B.A, Kim Dansie, MBA

### **HOME MODIFICATION DESIGNS FOR AN AGING POPULATION**

Melinda Francis

*Thesis Defense Date: February 15, 2005*

The purpose of this research project is to answer what existing resources in home modifications are available in Salt Lake County. This project will also try and identify simple and cheap modifications that may be done to an aging adult's home. The long term aim of this project is to serve as a resource guide to aging adults, other students, and those interested in home modifications. Simple home modifications that aging adults should consider doing to their homes were evaluated and recommended. Local community resources, government resources, and internet sites were identified and short explanations with contact information were provided. Professionals who work with aging adults provided recommendations to be implemented in aging adult's homes. Before and after pictures of simple modifications with brief descriptions are provided. At the conclusion of this project limitations to the project were mentioned and future research recommendations were made.

Committee: Scott Wright, PhD, Chair, Richard Connelly, PhD, Peter Hebertson, M.S.

## **A LOOK AT A COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER THROUGH THE NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS PROGRAM**

Rebecca Trickey

*Thesis Defense Date: June 23, 2005*

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of Neighbors Helping Neighbors, a community program designed to facilitate older adults' ability to remain independent and live in their own homes while preserving their quality of life. The study consisted of two populations- older adult participants in the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program and volunteers with the program. Analysis of the data suggests that the Neighbors Helping Neighbors participants believe that their quality of life has been improved since they have been in the program. Results from this study can be used to improve/develop NHN services. Future studies would benefit from a baseline in order to objectively determine improvements in the participants' well being as well as a larger sample population, needed to determine the statistical significance of any findings.

Committee: Michael Caserta, PhD, Chair, O. William Farley, PhD, Nancy Kelley-Gillespie, PhD, Anna Dresel, B.A.

## **A COMMUNITY EDUCATIONALLY BASED ACTIVITY PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY: FELDENKRAIS® LESSONS TO INCREASE MOBILITY AND DECREASE FALL RISK**

Charles Graybill

*Thesis Defense Date: August 4, 2005*

Decreased mobility and falls are a major concern for the elderly. As the "Baby Boomer" generation enters the 65 year and older group, this problem will escalate rapidly. Multifactorial interventions which are individualized and accessible to older adults are needed. Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement® (ATM) group lessons showed increase balance and balance confidence in patient groups. A six week program of Feldenkrais ATM lessons was developed using the application format required by the University of Utah Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. These lessons were designed to improve the efficiency of common functional activities performed by community dwelling elder adults. The six lessons developed were individualized, safe, and encouraged students to explore with curiosity common movement instructions. The Feldenkrais Method has demonstrated strong links to three learning theories; Experiential Education, Dynamic Systems Theory, and Critical Geragogy. Additional qualitative and quantitative research studies are needed to document additional outcomes relevant to ATM.

Committee: Scott Wright, Ph.D., Chair, Dale Lund, Ph.D., Michael Caserta, Ph.D., Carolee Moncur, PT PhD

## **Meeting the Physical Therapy needs of the Baby Boomers: Curriculum development for Physical Therapy continuing education and residency programs to encourage more Geriatric Clinical Specialists Christine Childers**

*Thesis Defense Date: March 21, 2006*

The medical profession overall, including Physical Therapy, has insufficient Geriatric specialists to meet the upcoming needs of the Baby Boomer generation. The Geriatric Clinical Specialist (GCS) is a physical therapist who has voluntarily prepared for an examination to confirm their skills as a geriatric clinician. There are currently only 684 GCS in the United States. This project examines the reasons behind the lack of geriatric specialists, and through a survey methodology establishes the educational needs of clinicians to help them prepare for the GCS examination. A curriculum has been developed, analyzed by peers and is presented as either the didactic portion of a residency program or a series of continuing education courses designed to help transition new graduates and current clinicians into Geriatric Clinical Specialists.

Committee: Michael Caserta, PhD, Chair, Dale Lund, PhD, Michael Caserta, PhD, Gina Musolino, PT, MSED, EdD

## **Food and Dining in Assisted Living:**

***A cultural audit of assisted living facilities meeting culturally-diverse needs***

Michael J. Williams Project Defense Date: July 17, 2006

The purpose of this paper is to profile Foods of the World, a cultural program focused on culture and food, to be implemented in assisted living facilities. Currently the United States is experiencing dramatic growth in the number of older adults. The aging population not only constitutes a larger group than in the past, but they are also becoming more diverse in race and ethnicity. With this increase in diversity, cultural preferences for a diverse aging population are constantly being overlooked and attention to cultural needs are often too general. There is a need to concentrate on culturally unique needs of older adults that are going unmet. The majority of assisted living facilities'

foods, as well as social and religious activities, are influenced by the “American worldview” regardless of their residents’ racial and ethnic backgrounds. This project addresses the need for cultural awareness and how food can be used as a process in providing both educational content and social interaction through the presentation of foods and group dining. The “Foods of the World” program will showcase various presentations of food from different regions and cultures of the world and provide participants with a better appreciation and understanding of others’ cultures by experiencing food from these cultures firsthand.

The goals of the cultural program are to 1) revitalize a friendly resident-based community, 2) open new perspectives of others’ cultures for older adults, 3) create a structured activity that enhances the quality of life for each of the residents, and 4) generate a positive image for the assisted living facilities that implement the program. A cultural audit of residents of an assisted living facility allows for an evaluation of the residents’ cultural awareness and interests. Much can be learned from the residents’ personal knowledge, experience, and interests regarding their cultural practices. It is possible to evaluate the extent to which residents are culturally competent, as well as what cultures are of interest to them. The results of the assessment can then be tailored to create a specific and personalized program for residents of any assisted living facility to best serve their unique resident populations.

Committee: Yvonne Sehy PhD, Chair, Dale Lund, PhD, Scott Wright, PhD.

### ***AggingSMART: The Utah Sourcebook of Education and Retraining Opportunities for Older Adults and Guide to Educational Programs in the Field of Aging***

Denise Brooks

Thesis Defense Date: August 11, 2006

The purpose of this project was to develop a sourcebook and web site that would serve as a highly accessible — comprehensive — coordinated — and renewable "one-stop shopping" resource for citizens in the state of Utah that would provide information about retraining and upgrading of skills for older adults, as well as a comprehensive listing of programs and courses in the field of aging. The web site ([www.aging.utah.edu/agingsmart](http://www.aging.utah.edu/agingsmart)) and Sourcebook is called Aging SMART (Services for Meaningful Access to Resources and Training). The project also was also overseen by the members of the Education Special Committee of the Utah Commission on Aging.

The project consists of the following components: 1) Literature review regarding the national justification and state rationale regarding education and retraining opportunities for older adults and professional development programs in the field of aging, 2) Assessment of status quo national and state resources, 3) Listing of education and retraining opportunities for older adults by county in the state of Utah, 4) Professional development programs and courses in the field of aging by county in the state of Utah, and 5) Significant economic implications for seniors, employers, state, and the nation by extending work and educational productivity of baby boomers, keeping them in the workforce longer and providing opportunities for people to continue to be personally engaged. Nearly every profession, especially those related to health, would be better able to meet the needs of a rapidly aging population by recognizing the relevancy of gerontological education. In other words, knowledge about gerontology should be incorporated into all aspects of society. Committee Members: Chair-Dr. Scott Wright, Dr. Dale Lund, Anne Peterson, MS

### ***The Evolving Demographics of Older Offenders in Utah***

Steve Caverley

Project Defense Date: February 2007

Although older inmates are a relative minority within the Utah Department of Corrections now, at slightly less than 7% of the total inmate population, their growth rate in terms of prison admissions has been increasing sharply at a rate of 19% per year. Sixty percent of older inmates are sex offenders, and this percentage increases with age. Although the growth rate for medical costs, the most expensive component of incarceration for older inmates, has been well controlled, older inmates are over-represented in the utilization of these services.

There has been a gradual increase in the number of older parolees and felony probationers under community correction’s supervision over the last 15 years. In 1990, 3.5% of supervised offenders in Utah were 55 years or older, but by the end of 2005 the proportion had grown to 5.2%. The synergy between older sex offenders being admitted to prison and the limited availability of prison-based sex offender treatment will have a limiting effect on releases of older inmates. This is likely to result in a higher concentration of older inmates over time. Up to now, sex offender treatment in a halfway house has been an alternative to prison-based treatment. However, with these halfway house beds already in short supply, this will become less of an option for older inmates convicted of sex offenses.

Utah has been fortunate in its ability to use the indeterminate sentencing structure to control prisoner growth, and the costly expansion of more prison beds, by maintaining a homeostasis between older prison admissions and releases. This will become more difficult in the future with older inmates, weighing the inescapable evolution of the aging demographics in Utah’s Corrections against the need to preserve community safety.

Committee members: Chair – Dr. Michael Caserta, Dr. Scott Wright, Russ Van Vleet, MSW

Brittany Erickson

Project Defense Date: August 20, 2007

In the year 2000 an amendment was made to the Older American Act entitled the “National Family Caregiver Support Program”. This amendment was created to assist family caregivers by providing information, services, assistance, support groups, training and respite care. The Utah Caregiver Handbook was created to do just that as it provides caregivers with beneficial information and resources as they serve the elderly population. Organized into three parts: family dynamics, community resources, and legal and financial issues, the handbook is designed to outline and explain major issues that Utah caregivers may be facing. The appendix provides caregivers with personal care tips, resources by subject, resources by county as well as a glossary defining caregiver terms and programs. Complete with pictures and charts, the handbook is presented in a user-friendly fashion to best serve Utah’s family caregivers. The information in the handbook was provided by a variety of sources. The majority of the handbook was created as an adaptation from North Carolina Caregiver’s Handbook. The Administration on Aging’s Caregiver Handbook was also utilized. Yet, as the handbook is designed specifically for Utah, the information and resources are pulled from various sources. Due to this fact, information provided may not necessarily represent official Administration on Aging policy. This project was under the direction of Sonnie Yudell, Program Manager, of the Utah Caregiver Support Program.  
Committee Members: Dr. Dale Lund, Dr. Scott Wright, Sonnie Yudell

***Meeting the Future Health Needs of the Baby-Boomer Population:  
Development of a Healthy Aging Program***

Project

Lauri Wild

A large segment of the American population is facing a crisis, one that threatens to affect the nation as a whole. Baby boomers are at potential risk to experience unhealthy aging outcomes and their unpleasant consequences: illness, chronic disease, extended years of disability and the accompanying loss of the ability to enjoy and engage in life. If this massive population becomes sick, disabled and dependent, it will create great economic and social burdens upon families, communities and the nation as a whole. To a large extent this scenario can be avoided if individual baby boomers who are at risk will take personal responsibility to change their lifestyles to ones that will support healthy aging.

The author has designed a healthy aging program specifically to teach those baby boomers what changes are needed. However, simple knowledge of health-promoting practices is not enough to make a difference in the difficult process of implementing those changes into busy daily lives. This program will lead individuals through a step-by-step process that will help them change their lifestyle behaviors to ones that will promote healthy aging. Participants will achieve this through increasing their knowledge of healthy aging, defining needed lifestyle changes, setting specific lifestyle change goals, and receiving ongoing support in implementing and refining the desired lifestyle changes. Theories of effective group dynamics and adult learning processes, as well as health behavior change models could potentially make the program more effective in meeting its goals. The overall objective of this program will be met if participants complete the course and improve some aspect of their health behavior that leads to a healthier lifestyle.

This well healthy aging program for midlife adults has great potential for contributing to the well-being and improving the lives of baby boomers, which will result in great benefits for the individual, their families, communities and our nation as a whole.

Committee members: Dr. Michael Caserta, Dr. Yvonne Sehy, Dr. Lynn Durant