FACT SHEET

AHRQ's Health Services Research Dissertation Grant Program

New Starts – Fiscal Year 2011

The mission of AHRQ is to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care by:

- Using evidence to improve health care.
- Improving health care outcomes through research.
- Transforming research into practice.

Introduction

The mission of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality is to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans. To help achieve the Agency's mission, AHRQ supports extramural research grants and contracts, research training, conference grants, and intramural activities.

AHRQ is committed to fostering the next generation of health services researchers who will focus their time and expertise on some of the most important problems facing our Nation's health care system. An important component of this effort is the Agency's dissertation research grant program, which provides 1-year awards to full-time predoctoral students enrolled in accredited research doctoral programs in the United States, including Puerto Rico and other U.S. Territories and possessions.

To qualify for dissertation awards, students must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents by the time of the grant award and must have completed all of their doctoral requirements by the time they submit a dissertation grant application.

This fact sheet provides brief descriptions of the 24 dissertation grant awards funded by AHRQ in fiscal year 2011. Each entry includes the project title, grantee's name and institution, his or her area of focus, the grant number and project period, and a short description and goal of the project.

Project Descriptions

Association Between Clinical Decision Support Systems and Health Care Disparities. Jordan Mitchell, doctoral candidate in Health Services Research and Policy, University of South Carolina Research Foundation. AHRQ grant HS021079; project period September 30, 2011 – September 29, 2012. This research will investigate the degree to which increased use of clinical decision support systems (CDSS) may contribute to reducing racial and rural/urban health quality disparities. The goal of the project is to use

national datasets along with propensity scores and multilevel models to examine the true treatment effect on reducing health disparities by CDSS.

Changes in Health Care Access and Utilization in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region. Kimberley Geissler, doctoral candidate in Health Policy and Management, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. AHRQ grant HS021074; project period September 30, 2011 – July 31, 2012. This research will examine the impact of increased crime in Mexico on U.S. residents who cross the border to get health care. It is not known whether U.S. residents will forego care or will substitute U.S. providers for Mexican providers.

Conceptualizations of Cancer Among Chronically Ill Older Adults. Susan Marie Hannum, doctoral candidate in Gerontology, University of Maryland Baltimore County. AHRQ grant HS020177; project period June 1, 2011 – May 31, 2012. This research will describe how chronically ill older adults (age 80+) conceptualize a new cancer diagnosis and the impact this has on later life. The goal of the project is to increase established knowledge of the illness experience and how older individuals process multiple, concurrent illnesses.

Depressive Symptoms and 30-Day Unplanned Hospital Readmission in Older Americans. Jennifer Albrecht, doctoral candidate in Epidemiology, University of Maryland, Baltimore. AHRQ grant HS021068; project period September 1, 2011 – August 31, 2012. This research will examine the independent association between depressive symptoms and unplanned 30-day hospital readmission in adults aged 65 and older. The goal of the project is to develop and evaluate interventions designed to reduce hospital readmissions attributable to depression.

The Development and Testing of a Framework for Understanding Effective Implementation. Rosalind Eve Keith, doctoral candidate in Health Management and Policy, University of Michigan. AHRQ grant HS020530; project period February 1, 2011 – January 31, 2012. This research study will develop and test a framework for understanding Patient-Centered Medical Home implementation in primary care clinics.

The Effect of Risk and Side Effect Communication on Asthma Medication Adherence. Christopher Michael Gillette, doctoral candidate in Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. AHRQ grant HS019103; project period July 1, 2011 – April 30, 2012. This research will examine how medical providers in general pediatric clinics discuss the risks, side effects, and benefits of asthma controller medications with primary caregivers and children. The goal is to design specific communication interventions to increase adherence.

Evaluating the Comparative Effectiveness of Genomic Health Risk Assessments for Common Chronic Health Conditions. Daniel Belsky, doctoral candidate in Health Policy and Management, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. AHRQ grant HS020524; project period February 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011. This research will evaluate the comparative effectiveness of genomic health risk assessments for common chronic health conditions in relation to family history information in identifying at risk individuals. The goal of this project is to determine if using genomic information in health risk assessments will aid in the translation of genome science to public health practice.

Evaluating Electronic Health Record Data for Use in Diabetes Quality Reporting. Annemarie Hirsch, doctoral candidate in Epidemiology and Health Services Research, Ohio State University. AHRQ grant HS020165; project period March 1, 2011 – February 29, 2012. This research will evaluate the validity of using electronic health record (EHR) data for quality measures. The goal of this project is to help provide knowledge for administrators of pay-for-performance programs who are developing quality reporting tools, as well as institutions who wish to leverage their EHR for internal quality reporting programs.

Exploring the Adaptive and Interpretive Dynamics of Implementation in Infection. Julia Szymczak, doctoral candidate in Sociology, University of Pennsylvania. AHRQ grant HS020760; project period July 15, 2011 – October 14, 2012. This study will explore the experience of one hospital as it implements an organization-wide infection prevention initiative in order to identify barriers to and facilitators of successful organizational change. The goal of the project is to improve implementation of evidence-based infection prevention practices in hospitals.

Geographic Access to Care and HPV Vaccine Uptake Among Ethnic Minority Girls. Jennifer Tsui, doctoral candidate in Health Services Research, University of California, Los Angeles. AHRQ grant HS020172; project period September 1, 2011 – May 30, 2012. This study will examine the impact of geographic/spatial access to safety-net immunization clinics and

other neighborhood socio-demographic and cervical cancer risk factors on human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine initiation among low-income, ethnic minority girls in Los Angeles County.

Geographic Inequities in Kidney Transplantation: Investigating Possible Solutions. Ashley Davis, doctoral candidate in Industrial Engineering and Management Sciences, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. AHRQ grant HS021078; project period September 30, 2011 – February 28, 2013. This research will investigate the significant geographic disparity existing across the country with respect to the median waiting time for end-stage renal dialysis wait-listed patients to receive a kidney transplant. The goal is to develop alternative, optimized kidney organ sharing strategies to improve geographic equity in kidney organ allocation policy through minimal proposed modifications to the present policy.

EHR Use and Care Coordination. Ilana Graetz, doctoral candidate in Health Services and Policy Analysis, University of California at Berkeley. AHRQ grant HS021082; project period September 1, 2011 – August 31, 2012. This research will evaluate the impact of outpatient physician use of a newly implemented, certified EHR system in Kaiser Permanente Northern California on measures of care coordination and, in turn, the association between care coordination and care quality for patients receiving care from multiple clinicians.

Identifying Types of Networks HIV Intervention Should Target to Promote Disclosure. Alexis Huynh, doctoral candidate in Policy Analysis, RAND Corporation. AHRQ grant HS020528; project period February 1, 2011 – January 31, 2012. This research will identify similarities in social environmental factors and disclosure behaviors across friendship and sexual networks. The goal of the project is to help inform which networks HIV interventions should target to promote disclosure behaviors.

The Impact of Coordinating Medicare and Medicaid Benefits for the Dually Eligible. Hye-Young Jung, doctoral candidate in Health Services Research, Brown University. AHRQ grant HS020756; project period July 1, 2011 – November 30, 2012. This study will examine dually eligible beneficiaries, those who qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid, who are generally sicker and have fewer financial resources compared to other Medicare enrollees. The goal of the project is to demonstrate the influence of coordinating Medicare and Medicaid benefits through an integrated managed care program to promote higher quality of care while providing health services more efficiently for this vulnerable population.

Implementation of Electronic Medical Records for Documentation: Implications for Efficiency and Safety of Workflow in Labor and Delivery. Kathleen Pine, doctoral candidate in Social Ecology, University of California at Irvine. AHRQ grant HS020753; project period July 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012. This study examines the impact of electronic medical record (EMR) implementation on the work processes and information flow in an inpatient labor and delivery unit. The goal is to provide a comprehensive view of the effects of EMR implementation on work processes throughout a major medical center.

Issues in Medicare Part D Selection. Julia Samantha Shoemaker, doctoral candidate in Pharmaceutical Health Services Research, University of Maryland, Baltimore. AHRQ grant HS020866; project period September 1, 2011 – November 30, 2012. This study will assess key features of the Medicare Part D prescription drug insurance program: take-up of the Low-Income Subsidy (LIS), the impact of LIS enrollment on drug utilization, and late enrollment into Medicare Part D. The goal is to provide a comprehensive evaluation of critical components related to participation in Medicare Part D and inform policy.

Long-Term Comparative Effectiveness of Rheumatoid Arthritis Treatment Strategies. Hawre Jalal, doctoral candidate in Health Services Research and Policy, University of Minnesota Twin Cities. AHRQ grant HS020868; project period September 1, 2011 – January 31, 2013. This study seeks to identify rheumatoid arthritis (RA) treatment sequences that are best for RA patients and can lower health care costs. The goal is to provide long-term comparative effectiveness evidence in order to reshape policies and clinical guidelines.

Making Sense of Health Information Technology in an Academic Medical Center. Rebecca Kitzmiller, doctoral candidate in Nursing, Duke University. AHRQ grant HS020161; project period March 1, 2011 – February 29, 2012. This research will describe and compare sense making by multidisciplinary project teams during the implementation of new information technology in a tertiary care hospital. The goal is to help health care project teams identify the needs of hospital personnel in order to customize software and therefore improve the likelihood that new systems will meet health care workers needs and improve patient outcomes.

Nurses' Information Needs While Caring for Hospitalized Children. Tiffany Kelley, doctoral candidate in Nursing, Duke University. AHRQ grant HS021075; project period September 1, 2011 – May 31, 2012. This study will attempt to understand the collection and communication of patient information needs by nurses for the use of nurses and health care team members while using paper-based nursing documentation. The goals of the project are to create standards for nursing documentation and identify areas for redesign of information technology to meet the needs of nurses and members of the health care team.

Optimal Design of Guidelines for Preventive Treatment to Manage Cardiovascular Disease. Jennifer Elizabeth Mason, doctoral candidate in Industrial Engineering, North Carolina State University at Raleigh. AHRQ grant HS020878; project period September 1, 2011 – August 31, 2012. This study will evaluate the comparative effectiveness of current treatment guidelines for cholesterol and blood pressure control in patients with type 2 diabetes. The goal of the project is to improve existing practice guidelines for prevention of cardiovascular events.

Predictors of Medication Adherence Among African Americans With Hypertension. Yendelela Cuffee, doctoral candidate in Clinical and Population Health Research, University of Massachusetts Medical School. AHRQ grant HS020755; project period July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012. This research will evaluate the association of self-reported discrimination with medication adherence and determine if trust in the

medical system mediates this association. The goal of this project is to understand the root causes of cardiovascular health disparities and improve health outcomes for African Americans.

A Qualitative Description of a Pilot Project to Improve Access to Care in One Dental Health Profession Shortage Area. Sarah Elaine Raskin, doctoral candidate in Medical Anthropology, University of Arizona. AHRQ grant HS019117; project period July 6, 2011 – September 30, 2012. This study aims to do a focused assessment of the pilot intervention by documenting patient, provider, and community perspectives on the use of mid-level providers. The goal is to impact State and possibly national policy on the use of mid-level providers to reduce disparities in access to dental care.

Rethinking Informed Consent for Pragmatic Comparative Effectiveness Trials. Danielle Whicher, doctoral candidate in Bioethics, Johns Hopkins University. AHRQ grant HS021064; project period September 1, 2011 – May 30, 2012. This research will explore which models of consent, disclosure, and authorization are both socially and morally acceptable for pragmatic clinical trials comparing approved and widely available therapies. The goal of the project is to develop a set of recommendations regarding acceptable strategies for informed consent, disclosure, or authorization for pragmatic comparative effectiveness research trials.

The Spatiotemporal Anatomy of Seasonal Influenza in the United States, 1968. Bianca Malcolm, doctoral candidate in Epidemiology, Columbia University Health Sciences. AHRQ grant HS021085; project period September 30, 2011 – September 29, 2012. This research will study the seasonality of influenza throughout the United States. The goal of the project is to aid public health professionals in refining influenza intervention strategies that include better placement and distribution of vaccines and other medicines.

More Information

For more information about the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, please visit the AHRQ Web site at www.ahrq.gov.

For specific information on the dissertation grant program, please contact:

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