

## Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation

### Abstract Form

In 250-350 words, define the research problem, state the significance of the research, and present the research methodology and plan for analysis. **DO NOT USE A SEPARATE SHEET.**

The long-term goal of this preliminary study is to provide knowledge needed to improve quality of life (QOL) for older, increasingly dependent women with pelvic floor dysfunctions (PFD) such as urinary or defecatory incontinence and vaginal prolapse. Previous studies have determined a high prevalence of PFD in older women, suggest the burden of PFD is often under-reported, and indicate an unstudied population of semi-dependent women in assisted living facilities. For chronic, non-lethal, debilitating problems like PFD, patient-perceived improved QOL is the most important outcome measure of treatment success, yet no symptom-specific QOL tools have been validated in this population of semi-dependent women. The specific aims of this study are to:

- 1) increase understanding of the unmet needs, preferences, and goals for pelvic floor care for women over age 65 who are residents in assisted living facilities, and
- 2) examine the usefulness of available subjective outcome measures.

This qualitative, exploratory study involves semi-structured interviews with up to 20 women residents of assisted living who report PFD. Participants will be purposefully selected to represent a range of PFD. Interviews will include open-ended questions related to the impact of PFD on activities and emotions, decisions on living situation, and self-concept. Also, the "Think Aloud" method will be used to review four potential short-form outcome assessment tools—two PFD symptom-specific QOL assessments, and two tools used to document individual patient goal-setting. The "Think Aloud" method of instrument review is used to support usefulness or validity in a new population. Recorded comments will be transcribed, analyzed, and organized using NVIVO and Access software. Results of this preliminary study will add to the knowledge base important to all those who care for semi-dependent, older women, including rehabilitation nurses, who promote function and provide symptom-management support, and other out-patient providers, referring home-care providers, researchers testing interventions, and policy-makers allocating resources.