

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.**

Nursing Care Practices and Other Factors Associated with Physical Function in Hospitalized Older Adults

Physical function is an important determinant of health, self-identity and quality of life in older adults. Occurring in one third to one half of all older patients, loss of physical function is associated with increased mortality, morbidity, and resource consumption in hospitalized older adults. While research has demonstrated that baseline vulnerabilities predispose older adults to functional decline, little is known about the contribution of nursing practice in the hospital setting. Consequently, there may be missed opportunities to prevent or reverse physical decline. This longitudinal, descriptive study examines the influence of both nursing practice and organizational factors upon change in physical function in a sample of 200 medical patients, age 70 and above, hospitalized in an urban community teaching hospital. Physical function is defined as activities in daily living (ADL) and physical activity, the latter measured by actigraphy. Correlational methods and regression models will be utilized to: (1) describe the relationship between patient characteristics (medical co-morbidity, depression, delirium, presence of syndromes, age, race/ ethnicity, education, marital status, place of residence) and change in physical function, measured from admission to day 3, and from admission to day of discharge in hospitalized older adults; (2) determine the influence of nursing care practices upon both the physical function and physical activity of hospitalized older adult medical patients; and (3) acquire an understanding of the relationship between organizational factors (nurse staffing and access to geriatric-specific resources) and nursing care practices related to the physical function of hospitalized older adults. Results will be used to inform the development of a system level intervention to prevent functional decline in hospitalized older adults.