The mission of ARN is to promote and advance professional rehabilitation nursing practice through education, advocacy, collaboration, and research to enhance the quality of life for those affected by disability and chronic illness.

Rehabilitation nursing is a philosophy of care, not a work setting or a phase of treatment. Rehabilitation nurses work in a range of practice settings including freestanding rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, long-term care and skilled nursing facilities, community and government agencies, and schools and universities.

The Association of Rehabilitation Nurses established the Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation (RNF) to advance rehabilitation nursing practice by promoting, supporting, conducting, and disseminating research to improve the quality of healthcare for individuals with disability and/or chronic health problems. RNF published the first edition of the Rehabilitation Nursing Research Agenda in 1995 to identify the gaps in rehabilitation nursing knowledge and to encourage research in these areas. In 2005 and again in 2014, the RNF research agenda and grant program were reviewed and priority areas for research important to rehabilitation nursing practice were established.

The process of revising the agenda included evaluating the effectiveness of the original agenda and placing it within the context of the healthcare system in the first decade of the 21st century. Proposed revisions were appraised by a representative sample of nurses practicing rehabilitation nursing. The revised agenda is consistent with the research goals of the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Nursing Research, as well as the national health objectives identified in the Healthy People initiative.

RNF accomplishes its mission by supporting grants to individual researchers to establish a scientific basis for the care of individuals with disabilities and/or chronic health problems. In evaluating applications for its grants, RNF gives preference to those that reflect the priorities identified in the agenda. RNF offers funding of over $30,000 annually for rehabilitation nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) and Quality Improvement (QI) projects. These funds are awarded in the form of multiple grants, including the New Investigator Research Award, the RNF Research Fellow grant, the New Investigator EBP/QI Award and the Fellow EBP/QI Award.

ARN and RNF are committed to periodic evaluation and revision of the research agenda. As rehabilitation nursing evolves, so too will the research agenda.

For more information about the rehabilitation nursing research agenda and the research grants available, contact RNF at:

Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation  
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Chicago, IL  60631  
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The agenda, developed by the Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation (RNF), addresses seven areas and includes brief descriptions of the high-priority research issues for each area:

1. Nursing and nursing-led interdisciplinary interventions to promote function in people of all ages with disability and/or chronic health problems
   1.1.a. Interventions promoting management of physiologic processes including, but not limited to, bowel, bladder, and skin care
   1.1.b. Interventions supporting behavior management to promote health and independence and/or improve quality of life in individuals and their families
   1.1.c. Interventions promoting sexual health based on the individual's values, beliefs, and developmental stage
   1.1.d. Interventions improving assessment and management of chronic pain/health problems
   1.1.e. Interventions addressing psychological needs of individuals living with disabilities and/or chronic health problems
   1.1.f. Interventions supporting community reentry and/or reintegration for individuals with disabilities and/or chronic health problems
   1.1.g. Interventions fostering successful aging with disability and/or chronic health problems, including chronic pain
   1.2.a Interventions promoting environmental access, safety, and function
   1.2.b Interventions using technology to improve independence and quality of life
   1.2.c Interventions promoting use of inter-professional teams to promote health/improve quality of life in individuals & their families
   1.2.d Interventions specific to rehabilitation settings
   1.3.a Interventions focused on individual education to enhance independence and wellness
   1.3.b Interventions focused on patient/family centered care and/or patient/family engagement in healthcare decision making
   1.3.c Interventions focused on assessment and enhancement of health literacy among individuals and their families
   1.3.d Interventions focused on transcultural approaches to enhance independence and promote health
   1.3.e Interventions focused on post-discharge education and/or care to promote function and quality of life
   1.3.f Specific population-focused interventions such as, but not limited to, pediatrics, oncology, and orthopedics

2. Experience of disability and/or chronic health problems for individuals and families across the lifespan
   2.1. Experience and meaning of independence for diverse individuals with disabilities and/or chronic health problems
   2.2. Response of diverse families to alterations in independence and disability and/or chronic health problems
   2.3. Experience and meaning of accessibility as it relates to diverse individuals, families, and communities
   2.4. Influence of caregivers of persons with disabilities and/or chronic health problems re maintenance of function & quality of life
   2.4. Experience and meaning of healthy lifestyles and/or healthy aging as it relates to disabilities and/or chronic health problems
3. Rehabilitation in the changing healthcare system
   3.1. Relationships between & among individual characteristics such as behavior &
         functional status, and caregiver staffing within rehabilitation settings
   3.2. Individuals' functional outcomes in relation to the type, intensity, and duration of
         rehabilitation nursing services received
   3.3. Effectiveness of rehabilitation programs with respect to individual and/or family
         outcomes across the continuum of care
   3.4. The impact of recent changes to the healthcare system and healthcare funding, such
         as, but not limited to, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), bundling, and accountability of
         rehabilitation nursing services on outcomes
   3.5. The impact of nurse staffing and patient acuity on the type, intensity, and duration of
         rehabilitation nursing services delivered
   3.6. The impact of legislation and funding on access to rehabilitation programs

4. The rehabilitation nursing profession
   4.1. Ethical issues related to the practice of rehabilitation nursing
   4.2. The effect of changing healthcare priorities on the practice of rehabilitation nursing
   4.3. The contributions and the cost of rehabilitation nurses as components of the
         rehabilitation process
   4.4. The effects of rehabilitation nursing practice models, advanced practice nursing, and
         nurses' competency levels on individual outcomes in various service settings
   4.5. Education and training needs for future, new, and experienced rehabilitation nurses

5. Nursing and outcomes evaluation
   5.1. The impact of the nurse on individual/population outcomes
   5.2. The impact of the CRRN on individual/population outcomes
   5.3. The impact of nurse education on individual/population outcomes
   5.4. The impact of the advanced practice nurse on individual/population outcomes
   5.5. The impact of patient and provider goals on outcomes
   5.6. The impact of rehabilitation setting on individual/population outcomes
   5.7. Evaluation of the integration of outcomes measurement into rehabilitation nursing

6. Nursing and evidence-based practice
   6.1. Evaluation of the integration of the best and latest evidence into rehabilitation nursing
         practice in terms of feasibility, cost effectiveness, timing, outcomes and sustainability
   6.2. Evaluation of the implementation of Institute of Medicine guidelines in the
         rehabilitation setting

7. Issues of quality and process improvement
   7.1. Examination of systematic processes in the rehabilitation setting that may affect
         patient care delivery and patient outcomes
   7.2. Application and evaluation of quality and/or process improvement initiatives related
         to rehabilitation nursing services

2014 Research Agenda Committee

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