

2006 Hartford Geriatrics Health Outcomes Research Scholars Awards Program
RESEARCH PROPOSAL

To be completed by the applicant. (Please use separate pages to answer these questions)

Name: Vineet Arora, MD, MA

Title of Proposed Research: Measuring the Quality of Care for Hospitalized Vulnerable Elders

Abstract: Please write an abstract of up to 300 words outlining the proposed research.

Although recent studies demonstrate that the quality of U.S. medical care is suboptimal, the quality of care provided to elderly patients is often overlooked. Although studies may include Medicare patients, few focus on geriatric-specific conditions, such as dementia. To address this problem, researchers from UCLA and RAND developed the ACOVE (Assessing Care of the Vulnerable Elder) Project to measure and improve the quality of care for elderly patients. The ACOVE Quality Indicators (QIs) are a series of IF/THEN statements designed for common clinical settings relevant for "vulnerable elders," or those patients age 65 or older and at increased risk for functional decline and death. Research to date demonstrates that quality of care provided to community-dwelling adults, as measured by ACOVE QIs, is suboptimal. In addition, those community-dwelling patients that receive a higher quality of care, as measured by ACOVE QIs, are at lower risk of death.

While ACOVE QIs have been tested in community-dwelling adults, they have not applied to a cohort of hospitalized vulnerable elders. Because hospitalization itself can contribute to excess morbidity and mortality due to certain geriatric-specific conditions (e.g. delirium, functional decline, pressure ulcers, etc.), assessing the quality of hospital care provided to vulnerable elders is particularly important. Furthermore, the testing and validation of ACOVE QIs as quality measures can inform current efforts to implement pay-for-performance programs. Ideal quality measures are broadly applicable, easy to operationalize, have high reliability, and meaningful association with outcomes. This proposal aims to: (1) use ACOVE-based measures to assess the quality of care for hospitalized vulnerable elders; (2) determine the relationship between the quality of care, as measured by ACOVE-based measures, and relevant patient outcomes for hospitalized vulnerable elders. From this work, I hope to determine which measures are particularly well-suited for measuring the quality of care provided to hospitalized vulnerable elders.