

2007 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: Supriya Gupta Mohile, MD, MS

Title of Proposed Research: Patterns of Care and Outcomes of Vulnerable Elders with Cancer

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

Background: As the population ages, the numbers of elders who are vulnerable (i.e., at risk for poor outcomes due to underlying functional, physical or cognitive impairment and/or comorbidities) increases dramatically. Little is known about the patterns of care and outcomes of vulnerable elders with cancer.

Specific Aims: 1) To estimate the prevalence of vulnerability in older cancer patients at progressive stages of cancer and treatment; 2) To assess the differences in the care patterns and clinical outcomes of vulnerable older cancer patients as compared to those who are not vulnerable; 3) To identify clinical and physiologic predictors of poor outcomes for vulnerable elders with cancer.

Proposal Design: In a multi-institutional prospective cohort study, baseline prevalence of vulnerability in 200 ethnically diverse older prostate cancer patients (150 with biochemical recurrence after local therapy and 50 controls) will be estimated using the Vulnerable Elder's Survey-13 (VES-13) and criteria proposed by Fried and Balducci. A trained research assistant will administer measures of vulnerability and geriatric assessment at baseline, 6 months, and 1 year. Physiologic biomarkers associated with a vulnerable state (hemoglobin, interleukin-6, cholesterol, C-reactive protein, and albumin) will be collected at baseline and 1 year. We will estimate the association between baseline vulnerability and the decision to start androgen ablation at 6 months and identify predictors of poor outcome, i.e., functional decline and/or death, at 1 year. In a second population-based study, we will describe vulnerability and its relationship to patterns of care of older cancer patients within the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey.

Long-term Objectives: Ideally, this data would contribute to the design of geriatric oncology studies to determine whether geriatric assessment can help with patient selection and improve outcomes and quality of life. In addition, this research will inform the development of geriatric-specific interventions to improve outcomes of vulnerable elders with cancer.