

Aanand D. Naik
Baylor College of Medicine

Title of Proposed Research: Goal-Setting for Older Adults with Multiple Morbid Conditions

A. Abstract

Chronic morbid conditions like hypertension and diabetes are common among older adults, contribute to serious cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, and frequently present with multiple related morbidities. Despite the availability of numerous effective treatments, hypertension remains largely uncontrolled among older adults, with even lower rates of control among those with co-morbid conditions. Goal-setting may be an effective strategy for addressing this clinical problem and patient-clinician encounters are the appropriate forum for discussion of goals-based treatment plans. However, little is known about the methods by which older adults, their clinicians and caregivers negotiate the complex and often conflicting goals for multiple morbid conditions. The aims of this study are to: 1) delineate the processes by which older adults internalize and prioritize hypertension goals among competing morbidities (i.e., co-morbid diseases and functional impairments) and negotiate the performance of goal-setting behaviors with their clinicians and caregivers; 2) identify barriers and facilitators of collaborative goal-setting, including intrapersonal determinants (i.e., patient-clinician relationship, and patient-caregiver characteristics); and 3) explore the effect of impairments in executive capacity on the setting and performance of goals and self-care tasks among older adults with multiple morbidities and those with limitations in activities of daily living.

To accomplish these aims, we will conduct structured, in-depth interviews of older adults, their clinicians and caregivers. Participants will be purposively sampled, targeting older adults with hypertension and at-least one other common chronic morbidity and those with documented declines in executive function. Interviews will be analyzed using the constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis to develop categories of data and themes to address our study aims. This study will provide a framework for the development of clinical trials for complex interventions to improve the collaborative establishment of treatment goals and performance of self-care tasks for older adults with multiple morbid conditions.