

Sunday, June 6, 2010

## Barbara Harrison studies falls of older adults

Assistant Professor **Barbara Harrison**, of the **School of Nursing**, is an expert in gerontological nursing. She is the lead author of a study published in the January-February issue of the journal **Geriatric Nursing** (Volume 31, Pages 8-16), titled "**Evaluating the Relationship Between Inattention and Impulsivity-Related Falls in Hospitalized Older Adults**." Allesee Endowed Chair of Gerontological Nursing, Ann Whall, was a coauthor on the study. The abstract of the paper is given below.

"Impulsivity in older adults is poorly understood and there is limited literature on the relationship between impulsivity and falls. This retrospective study evaluated the relationship between inattention and impulsivity related falls (IRF) in hospitalized older adults. The sample (N = 192) included patients 65 years and older with a documented in-patient fall in 2007. "Impaired judgment" was identified as the critical attribute of IRF. The Confusion Assessment Method item for inattention was extracted as the variable for inattention. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of falls were classified as IRF. A significant relationship was found between inattention on the shift prior to a fall and the fall being an IRF (Chi-square = 45.5, df = 1, p = .00, Phi = .54, p = .00). Early identification of older adults with impaired attention has potential to reduce IRE when nursing uses this assessment to implement additional safety interventions for hospitalized older adults."

### SUMMARY

Assistant Professor Barbara Harrison studies falls in hospitalized older adults.

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