Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology

Jillian Pine

M.A., Psychology, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2018
B.A., Psychology, Pennsylvania State University, 2010

Family Care Partners of Chronically Ill Older Adults:
The Role of Uncertainty in Illness

Date: July 30, 2018
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Place: 339 Stadler Hall

Abstract
This study integrated research on family care partners of older adults and research on uncertainty in chronic illness. Previous findings were extended by examining care partners of older adults with multiple chronic conditions and highlighting early-stage undiagnosed cognitive impairment as a uniquely unclear condition. Participants were 45 women assisting community-dwelling, earlier generation older adults with multiple chronic health conditions and a prognosis of more than six months. Online survey data was used to test the hypotheses that increased illness uncertainty would be associated with increased care partner-recipient relationship strain and increased care partner stress. This study also hypothesized that the strength of these associations would be reduced after controlling for the interaction of care recipient cognitive impairment and presence or absence of a diagnosed neurocognitive disorder. A significant association was not found between uncertainty and dyadic strain; however, when the interaction between impairment and diagnostic status was controlled for, uncertainty emerged as a significant predictor of dyadic strain. A significant association was found between uncertainty and stress; when the interaction between impairment and diagnostic status was controlled for, uncertainty remained a significant predictor of stress. Taken together, results suggest that illness uncertainty is a relevant factor in understanding caregiving experiences for women caring for chronically ill older adults.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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