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 Nursing

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M.S. in Gerontology, May, 2014, University of Missouri-St. Louis
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Potential Predictors of Cognitive Decline among Cognitively Impaired Older African Americans
Living in Congregate Residential Settings

Date: November 21, 2017
Time: 10:00am to 12:00pm
Place: Nursing Administration Building, Rm. 117

Abstract
The purpose of this secondary data analysis was to identify potential psychosocial predictors of cognition, including social support, depression, and functional activity, among older African Americans, ≥ 65 years, with a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease and living in congregate residential settings. Guided by the main effect model of social support, this study used existing data from the National Alzheimer’s Coordinating Center Uniform Data Set, an NIH-funded multicenter study. Results showed that on average, the participants (n=56) were 81.7 years of age with 13.8 years of education. All but six were married. Bivariate Pearson correlations indicate a moderately strong negative relationship between social support and functional activities ($r = -.42$, $p < .01$) and between frequency of phone calls and functional activities ($r = .59$, $p < .01$). On the other hand, there is a strong positive relationship between frequency of phone calls and cognition ($r = .53$, $p < .01$), but a negative relationship between frequency of visits and level of cognition ($r = -.37$, $p < .01$). For functional activity, there was a strong inverse relationship between IADLs and level of cognition ($r = -.72$, $p < .01$). Further results on hierarchical multiple regression suggest that the extent of social support $F(9,21)=3.08$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .57$, adjusted $R^2 = .38$, and level of functional activity $F(8,30)=6.10$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .62$, adjusted $R^2 = .52$ predicted level of cognition. Results of model testing suggest that social support explained 57% of the variance for level of cognition, while functional activity accounted for 62% of the variance for level of cognition. Results of the study have implications for future research, nursing practice, and policy that can benefit this population and their informal caregivers. Future research should consider the type of support and level of satisfaction and further investigate which functional activity items are greatly affected as the disease progresses to create culturally-tailored interventions.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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