Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Dr. Denise Tate, Associate Chair for Research and Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Co-Director of University of Michigan SCI Model System (UM SCIMS), has been collaborating with her Brazilian colleagues for more than 20 years. Her current partnership with Dr. Julia Greve, Director of the SCI Program at USP’s Hospital das Clinicas, began when they decided to adapt the datasets used to collect information about spinal cord injuries across the world into Brazilian Portuguese. They have been developing a common database to collect information to inform clinical care to illustrate the importance of standard datasets in guiding clinical treatment and research in SCI. They have translated and completed psychometric studies of the SCI Bowel Function Basic dataset and are in the process of completing others for joint use in future clinical validation studies. Testing these datasets adds to the current studies being conducted at the UM SCIMS, which focus on examining the influence of bowel and bladder management on complications and quality of life after SCI.

Comparing data cross culturally is another added benefit of this international collaboration. The Presidents of the International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS) and the American Spinal Injury Association have endorsed the project. More recently, another joint project they wrote together, Development of standard methods to evaluate driving among older individuals with and without disabilities, was awarded one of five UM-FAPESP grants in 2013. The team, involving other FMUSP and UM post graduate students and faculty—such as Drs. Bruno Giordani, Krishnan Chandramouli, Jean Shope, Paula Kartje, Mark Peterson and Ron Maio—met in Ann Arbor in 2013. In 2014, the group went to São Paulo and participated in lectures and presentations of a workshop developed jointly with their Brazilian partners. A conference report is being organized next. The group is also jointly writing two papers to be submitted by Fall 2014.

Primary Care: Health Equity and Chronic Disease Management

Dr. Michele Heisler, Professor of Internal Medicine and Health Behavior and Health Education, and her partner at FMUSP, Dr. Alexandra Brentani, also received a UM-FAPESP two-year planning grant. Their collaboration brings together two teams of interdisciplinary researchers (including Lawrence An, UM Center for Health Communication Research; Sarah Burgard, UM Department of Sociology; and Ken Resnicow, UM School of Public Health) to develop collaborative projects in three principal areas: 1) population-based longitudinal cohort studies; 2) development and evaluation of cost-effective primary care-based programs to improve child health and chronic disease prevention and management; and 3) creation and testing of innovative eHealth platforms and behavioral approaches to improve delivery of primary care outreach to vulnerable populations. A pilot study at one health center in a low-income neighborhood in São Paulo is underway. In addition, Dr. Heisler applied for and received one of the Faculty-led Summer Research Projects funded by the UMMS’s Global REACH program. Five M1 students were funded under that program and worked on research projects in conjunction with the UM-FMUSP collaborative program. See Page 40 for more information.