RESEARCH STATEMENT
My overall research goal is to use a variety of therapeutic approaches and technology to improve function and independence in older adults and individuals with disabilities. From a content perspective, I investigate mobility decline in older adults and consequences of restricted mobility including falls, activity avoidance and reduced participation. I employ a holistic approach that considers personal, social, cultural and environmental factors that impact individuals with restricted mobility. I utilize modern measurement techniques to develop and/or modify outcome measures related to my area of interest. I use advanced technologies to improve access to rehabilitation and provide care in the home environment.

EDUCATION:


WORK EXPERIENCE:
Department of Veterans Affairs, Center of Innovation on Disability and Rehabilitation Research – (CINDRR) – Assistant Director, Research Health Scientist, and Co-leader Mentoring Core.
Department of Veterans Affairs, Gainesville, FL. August 2008- present time.
Responsibilities: Develop a strong research program in the area of rehabilitation and outcomes research relevant to Veterans with disabilities. Duties include leading research studies as Principal Investigator, supervise and manage research team, collaborate with other VA researchers as co-Investigator, publish study results in peer-reviewed journals, and present study findings at local, national, and/or international conferences. Administrative responsibilities include supervising CINDRR administration and operations activities. Mentorship activities include weekly meetings with mentees, recruitment of candidates, development of mentoring plan, evaluation of mentees and reporting center wide mentorship activities and productivity.

University of Florida, Department of Occupational Therapy - Research Assistant Professor.
Responsibilities: Develop a strong research program in the area of rehabilitation and outcomes research relevant to individuals with disabilities. Duties include leading research studies as Principal Investigator, supervise and manage research team, collaborate with other researchers as co-Investigator, publish study results in peer-reviewed journals, and present study findings at local, national, and/or international conferences. Teaching responsibilities include Master and Doctoral level courses in research methods, measurement and rehabilitation science. Mentoring includes undergraduate honors, master, doctoral and post-doctoral students.
Department of Veterans Affairs, Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center – Pre-Doctoral Associated Health Rehabilitation Research Fellowship.
Responsibilities: Complete research project in the areas of veteran-centered outcomes in the rehabilitation of gait disorders and detection of minimally significant changes in the same population.

Department of Veterans Affairs, Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center - Health Scientist / Education Specialist.
Responsibilities: Develop culturally sensitive educational materials for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Participate in the evaluation of veterans interviews to assess specific needs of this population. Develop a literature/references database for issues related to Veterans’ readjustment after deployment. Assist in data collection and development of data extraction procedures to investigate the implementation of a dysphasia screening tool for veterans who have suffered a stroke.

University of Florida, College of Health Professions – Research assistant/Data manager.

University of Florida, College of Health Professions – Charlotte Liberty Scholar.
Responsibilities: Assigned to Gait and Balance Clinic at the Gainesville VA/GRECC. Design and development of a clinical database for patients participating in clinic. Data entry, management, and analysis.

HONORS
2001 Charlotte Liberty Doctoral Scholar award (2 years).
2007 VA Pre-Doctoral Associated Health Rehabilitation Research Fellowship Award.

CURRENT EXTERNAL SUPPORT
VA HSR&D 1 I50 HX001233-01 2009-2018
Center of Innovation on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (CINDRR)
CINDRR is dedicated to conducting research that identifies, develops, and tests strategies for improving Veteran rehabilitation services across the continuum of care and providing long term support for Veterans with disabilities and their families, including issues related to access, utilization, cost, quality, and health outcomes.
Role: Co-Investigator
Annual Direct Costs: $750,000

VA PM&R National Program Office 2017
Tele-Rehabilitation Enterprise Wide Initiative Evaluation Planning
The Office of Rural Health has awarded the Tele-Rehabilitation Enterprise Wide Initiative (TREWI) to the VACO PM&R National Program Office. The TRWEI budget includes FY2017 funds for program evaluation planning.
Role: Co-investigator
Annual Direct Costs: $110,448
National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research  
Postdoctoral Disability Policy Research Training Program  
Role: Principal Investigator  
Annual Direct Costs: $750,000

NF/SGVHS Research Service Pilot Funding Initiative  
2017  
Development and Preliminary Testing an Annie Protocol to Deliver NIH-PROMIS Measures  
The overall purpose of this line of research is to incorporate PROMIS measures into VA clinical practice using text-based technology (Annie). For this pilot we want to test the feasibility of this approach by creating an Annie protocol to deliver a PROMIS measure to Veterans.  
Role: Principal Investigator  
Annual Direct Cost: $16,000

US National Endowment for the arts  
2017-2018  
Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network Telehealth Design, Plan and Service Support  
This project aims at implementing and evaluating a telehealth-delivered arts therapy program for Veterans in North Florida/South Georgia.  
Role: Co-Investigator  
Annual Direct Cost: $192,000

PUBLICATIONS IN REFEREED JOURNALS (IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER).


PRESENTATIONS:
Lee, M., Romero, S., Hong, I., & Park, H. The Disparate Functional Abilities in Activities of Daily Living among Persons with Different Disability Grades and Types. Interactive


Ramroop, M, Romero S, Prather, E, Slaibe, E, Winkler, SL. *User testing of SPOOCI: an innovative power wheelchair control device*. AOTA Annual Conference, April 2015.


**COMMITTEES**
Rehabilitation Science Steering Committee, 2014 – Present time
NIH K-12 Executive Committee, 2014 – Present time
VA Scientific Projects Committee, 2014 – Present time
Public Health and Health Promotions Research Committee, 2014 – 2016

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

University of Florida, department of Occupational Therapy, Rehabilitation Science Doctoral program, Fall 2012-Present time. Class: Rehabilitation Science Theory and Application.


MENTORING
Co-leader, Mentorship Core, Center of Innovation on Disability and Rehabilitation Research – (CINDRR). Provide mentoring for Junior Investigators, Post-Doctoral fellows and pre-doctoral students.

Fellows, and Pre-Doctoral students.
Luz Mairena Semeah, Ph.D, MPA, Post-Doctoral Fellow (Program Director)
Leslie Santos Roman, Ph.D, Post-Doctoral Fellow (Program Director)
Pallavi Sod, Doctoral graduate student (Doctoral Committee Chair)
Mi Jun Lee, Doctoral graduate student (Doctoral Committee Chair)
Stephanie Facompre, Honor Student. Thesis title: Validation of Balance Measures Used to Assess Patients with Parkinson’s Disease.

LANGUAGES:
Fluent in Spanish. Experience in translating educational materials in the areas of health, human development, nutrition and exercise.

ACCREDITATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS:
Certified Athletic Trainer.

COMPLETED EXTERNAL SUPPORT
Associated Health Rehabilitation Research award. Romero (PI) 2007 –2008
Department of Veterans Affairs, Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center. Veteran-centered outcomes in the rehabilitation of gait disorders and detection of minimally significant changes in the same population.
Role: Principal Investigator

RORC Pilot Award, Romero (PI) 2010-2011
Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center Pilot award program Development of a Gait and Balance Research Database
The purpose of this grant is to develop a research database that will support a number of studies in the areas of falls assessment and rehabilitation, distance physical therapy delivery, clinical and laboratory correlates of mobility impairment, and other research activities related to geriatric gait and balance rehabilitation.
Role: Principal Investigator

NIH/ NIA Romero (PI Sub-award) 2010-2011
Wheelchair with drop down armrest for sliding transfers by user.
This project produces several versions of the “SAFESLIDEBOARD,” a wheelchair with an integral transfer board/armrest combination, that are more easily positioned, stronger, more stable during transfers, and commercially viable. Eight hypotheses will be tested and structured interviews conducted to measure the effectiveness of SAFESLIDEBOARD from wheelchair user and caregiver perspectives
Role: Principal Investigator (Sub-award)

ID-122, Shorr (PI) 2010-2011
VHA Information Technology Innovation Program
Gait and Balance Assessment with Live Video from the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) Interface with Vista Imaging
A collaborative endeavor to enhance the gait & balance assessment of frail elderly veterans using a live assessment of a a 3-5 minute video feed, downloaded into the VISTA imaging interfaced with the patient’s CPRS, reviewed in “real time” by primary health care providers.
Role: Co-Investigator

1R21HD053526-01A2 Romero PI (Sub-award) 2010–2013
National Institute of Health
SPOOCI: Self-Referenced Personal Omni-Purpose Orthotic Control Interface.
The major goals of this project are to develop and test an innovative power wheelchair controller that removes the controller from the wheelchair so that it can be worn by the user.
Role: Site- PI  Annual Direct Costs: $275,000
Person months per year: 2.4

VA HSR&D Merit Romero (PI) 2012-2015
Item Banking Across the Continuum of Care
The broad, long-term objective of this proposed research is to advance Veteran health care delivery by providing the VHA with a state-of-the-art measurement system that builds upon the well-established VHA infrastructure use of the FIM in IRFs and the MDS in CLCs.
Annual Direct Costs: $107,000
Person months per year: 3

VA Rural Health Information Exchange Pilot Program Romero (Site PI) 2013-2015
Veteran Initiated Coordination Trial of Rural Health Information Exchange VICTOR-HIE
The My HealtheVet Program Office and the VA Office of Rural Health (ORH) are collaborating in this project to pilot use of My HealtheVet to help Veterans communicate with their non-VA providers about their VA care.
Annual Direct Costs: $104,000
Person months per year: 2.4

Project Number: NA Freytes (PI) 2012 – 2014
Source: VA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care
Web Support for Caregivers of Elderly Veterans with Dementia
The goal is to compare and evaluate the effectiveness of two different approaches/technologies in support of caregivers of Veterans with dementia (telephone support versus internet based support) on caregiver and veteran outcomes.

Role: Co-I, Total Award Amount: 151,709
Person months per year: 2.4

Project number: G573-4 2012 – 2014
Source: VA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care

**Online and Telephone Skills-Building Program for Caregivers of Veterans with Stroke**
The project evaluates a brief, low-cost, online and telephone skills-building intervention, using the existing and previously tested English- and Spanish-language VA RESCUE stroke caregiver website. The project also involves a feasibility test of the intervention targeting Spanish-speaking caregivers as a novel strategy to reduce cultural disparities.
Role: Co-I, Uphold PI Total Award Amount: $199,500
Person months per year: 2.4

1001AR057967-01 Shulman (PI) Romero (Site PI) 2009 – 2016
National Institute of Health, NIAMS (No cost extension)

**Development and Validation of a Self-Efficacy Item Bank.**
This study will develop and pilot test self-efficacy patient reported outcomes item pools for the Patient Reported Outcomes System. Specific aims are: 1. To develop an item pool for assessing self-efficacy for self-management of chronic conditions, 2. To validate an item bank of self-efficacy in five chronic neurologic disorders, and 3. To investigate the derived measures of self-efficacy in chronic neurologic disorders.
Annual Direct Costs: $552,638
Person months per year: 2.4

1I21RX001431-01 Romero (PI) 2013-2016
VA RR&D SPIRE

**Eyes Behind the Video Camera: Partnering with Families for Home Safety**
The overall goal is to improve Veterans’ home safety. For this SPIRE proposal we will test the feasibility of partnering with caregivers to video-record the Veteran’s home for subsequent professional home-safety evaluations. In addition, we will investigate compliance barriers and facilitators to professionally prescribed home-safety modifications.
Annual Direct Costs: $100,000
Person months per year: 3


**Internet and Telephone Support Intervention for Stroke Caregivers**
This is a pilot project to test the impact of an online and telephone intervention designed to improve outcomes of stroke caregivers and Veterans.
Annual Direct Costs: $100,000
Role: Co-I