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

Rachael Beard

B.S. in Nursing, December 2003, Southeast Missouri State University
M.Ed, in Educational Psychology and School Counseling, May 2007, University of Missouri- Columbia
M.S. in Nursing, May 2011, McKendree University
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A Descriptive Study of Health-Related Risks and Outcomes Differences by Loneliness Status in a Sample of Older Veterans

Date: April 15, 2021
Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
There is a need to understand the influences and outcomes related to loneliness in veterans living with chronic illness. Using a descriptive, correlational design, this study described baseline characteristics and explored differences in loneliness among veterans admitted to the hospital with three illnesses (heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or pneumonia). Patients require self-care to manage complications and exacerbations associated with these illnesses. Deficits in self-care result in negative health outcomes and drive resource utilization upward. The identification of potential factors related to self-care is important. Loneliness may be one factor that influences a patients’ ability and desire to care for themselves. Descriptive, correlational design was used to evaluate loneliness both as a predictor and outcome. Other variables of interest included sociodemographic and clinical characteristics of the study sample and measures of healthcare utilization. There were no statically significant findings from this study; yet knowledge generated helped to inform the development of a veteran-centric view of loneliness that may support greater understanding of loneliness in the veteran population. The researcher concluded that the proposed study framework was not supported by the study findings and a revised framework is suggested to guide loneliness research in the future. Knowledge generated from this study may inform future research that aims to decrease loneliness and increase self-care, leading to improved outcomes in veterans living with complex illness.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Anne Fish, Ph.D. - chair
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Nancy Magnuson, Ph.D.