

Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation

Abstract Form

In 250-350 words, define the research question, state the significance of the research project, and present the research methodology and plan for analysis.

DO NOT USE A SEPARATE SHEET.

Abstract

Background: Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the population in the United States. By 2030, 72.1 million Americans will be over 65 years of age. Many are living with multiple chronic conditions. Self-care behaviors are a health priority to effectively manage chronic conditions and are highly influenced by relationships with formal and informal caregivers within social networks. *Purpose:* The aim of this study is to determine how social network characteristics and social network functions influence self-care behaviors and affect health outcomes among community dwelling older adults living with multiple chronic conditions. This is consistent with the research agenda of the Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation. *Methods:* The proposed study will use mixed methods. Individuals 65 and older living in the community will be interviewed using valid and reliable instruments to collect demographic, social, and health outcomes data. Data analysis will examine the correlations between the independent variables of characteristics and functions of social networks with the dependent variables of self-care behaviors and health. Qualities that emphasize the contexts of these relationships will be described through open ended questions to identify themes across participants related to social influences on self-care behaviors. *Implications:* There is an increased need to understand how health is supported in an aging population within dynamic relationships that influence self-care to maintain optimal health. The findings of this research, will provide knowledge that can guide nurses in forming supportive care networks that may improve independence, health, functioning, and access to meaningful resources. This research will provide insights that optimize health and social relationships in caring for the self and one another while living with multiple chronic conditions.

Keywords: self-care; multiple chronic conditions, social networks, chronic illness, aging