Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Alexia Torke

RESPECT Center Core Faculty Dr. Alexia Torke recently began a 4-year study funded by the National Institute of Aging designed to validate the Family Inpatient Communication Survey, a measure developed and pilot tested by Torke's research team. This survey examines several elements of communication, such as emotional support and frequent communication, which Dr. Torke and fellow researchers have identified in earlier work as especially important for decision making. The Family Inpatient Communication Survey is currently being administered as part of a surrogate interview for the CHIPS Study (Communication in the Hospital: Impact on Patients and Surrogates), which began in April 2012. Pilot work for the survey was funded by a grant from the RESPECT Center. The long-term goal of the CHIPS Study project is to improve the quality of decisions made for hospitalized patients and to decrease the distress of surrogates who must make difficult choices on behalf of patients.

In addition to her current grant award, Dr. Torke's recent accomplishments include being co-author of "Making Decisions for Hospitalized Older Adults: Ethical Factors Considered by Family Surrogates" published in the summer 2013 issue of the Journal of Clinical Ethics. The study was also recently profiled in The New York Times blog, The New Old Age.

Dr. Torke is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Department of General Medicine and Geriatrics at the Indiana University School of Medicine, Associate Director of the Fairbanks Fellowship in Clinical Ethics, Center Scientist for the Indiana University Center for Aging Research and Investigator for the Regenstrief Institute, Inc. Members of her research team include co-investigators, Drs. Callahan, Sachs, Wocial, and Helft; biostatisticians James Slaven, and Patrick Monohan; and research staff Annie Montz, Emily Burke, Lev Inger, Kilby Osborn, and Evgenia Teal.