

of life and the quality of care. Using ordered logistic regression, this study analyzed the length of stay of 7,307 patients who died in 2015 while receiving care in the largest hospice agency in the DC metro region. Cancer diagnoses and residence in a higher median income neighborhood were associated with shorter lengths of stay. Female sex, older age, and residence in a lower median income neighborhood were associated with longer lengths of stay. The findings indicate that differences in demographic and diagnostic characteristics likely affect hospice length of stay.

## SESSION 1265 (SYMPOSIUM)

### THE INTERSECTION OF ETHICS AND VULNERABLE ELDERLY

Chair: Pamela B. Teaster, *Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, United States*

Discussant: Georgia Anetzberger, *Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, United States*

Researchers, practitioners and policymakers are daily confronted with multiple and competing situations regarding vulnerable older adults and the complex issues that they face in all aspects of their lives. Challenges can arise in the provision of social services, dispensing justice, conducting research, or addressing legal issues. The purpose of this symposium is to discuss dilemmas that vulnerable older adults and concerned others face by elucidating current and future challenges facing this population, particularly in the realms of compromised health (cognitive impairment); effective status (gender); care arrangements (home and community-based services); and abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Teaster and Anetzberger discuss relevant ethical theories and principles as well as a definition of vulnerability. Santos and Nichols-Hadeed report on ethical issues embedded in vulnerable elders' cognitive status. Bowland and Halaas highlight the intersection of ethics, gender and vulnerable elders. Niles-Yokum and Beaumaster discuss the nexus of ethics and the provision of home and community based services for vulnerable older adults. Heisler considers vulnerabilities of older adults and ethical challenges when addressing elder abuse. Throughout the papers, we weave the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.

### ETHICAL DILEMMAS PRESENTED BY COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT AND VULNERABLE ELDERLY

Elizabeth J. Santos,<sup>1</sup> and Corey A. Nichols-Hadeed<sup>2</sup>, *1. University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry, Rochester, New York, United States, 2. University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, New York, United States*

Identification and assessment for cognitive impairment is a difficult task further complicated by the need to determine capacity. Issues related to cognitive impairment and capacity create ethical dilemmas potentially spanning all four ethical principles: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. This paper uses a case scenario to describe different types of cognitive impairment and demonstrate ethical issues that commonly arise when treating patients with cognitive impairment in the clinical setting. The authors also recognize the complexity of capacity as an issue that spans both the

medical and legal fields and provides explanations and distinctions. The overall goal of this paper is to raise awareness of the impact of cognitive impairment on the vulnerability of older adults, describe the complex ethical issues that cognitive impairment and capacity raise and the importance of defining capacity in the context of the legal and medical fields.

### A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERATION OF GENDER IN ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

Sharon Bowland,<sup>1</sup> and Beth Halaas<sup>3</sup>, *1. University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, United States, 3. Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Washington, United States*

Gender role stereotypes, social norms and social policies negatively influence health and well-being for marginalized groups. These inequalities are embedded in the fabric of our society and are often unquestioned and hidden. Practitioners frequently use an ethical lens that does not consider the influence of gender on life course decision-making. We developed the Practice Framework for Older Persons (PFOP) to assess past and current realities that take gendered experiences into consideration. By contextualizing means and opportunities, a more complete picture can be drawn about a person's unique gender experiences. Subsequently, we can better understand their decision-making processes, wants, needs, and desires. This type of assessment may be particularly beneficial for women and transgender persons given ethical demands for practice paradigms which consider gender fluidity and development of a sense of personal agency.

### THE INTERSECTION OF VULNERABILITY AND OLD AGE: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Kelly Niles-Yokum<sup>1</sup>, *1. University of La Verne, La Verne, California, United States*

This session focuses on ethical considerations in the context of long-term services and supports (LTSS) for vulnerable older adults. Long-term supports for vulnerable older adults can no longer adhere to a "one-sized fits all" solution. We will explore the intersection of vulnerability, old age, and community which present a myriad of ethical issues in both the planning and delivery of supports for older adults. The quest for a just society goes beyond understanding and considering the critical issues of the vulnerability of older adults in our society in that this pursuit provides a pathway to develop and implement programs and services that allow all of us the opportunity to live in a world that both protects and can provide the opportunity for self determination and dignity.

### ETHICAL DILEMMAS, VULNERABLE ELDERLY, AND ELDER ABUSE

Candace J. Heisler<sup>1</sup>, *1. Heisler and Associates, San Bruno, California, United States*

Elder abuse is a growing concern worldwide. It is described across multiple professional disciplines: as a social justice issue by social workers; as a medical syndrome and public health issue by health care providers; and as a violation of human rights and criminal laws by courts, legislators, and the justice system professionals. Elder abuse assumes different forms, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse,