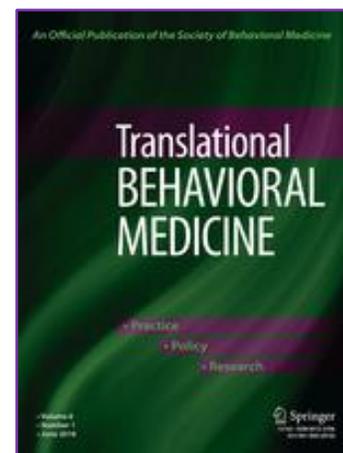


Translational Behavioral Medicine

Special Section Call for Abstracts: Networks and Health Care Outcomes

Guest Editors: Crystal Wiley Cené, MD, MPH, and Brian Southwell, PhD

Although the notion of network influences has been salient in recent years,¹⁻³ we do not currently have sufficient evidence on the specific roles of personal, professional, and organizational networks on health care outcomes. We invite papers focused on documenting and explaining the influence of interpersonal and organizational networks on health and health care outcomes for a special section of *Translational Behavioral Medicine*. This special section will go beyond available evidence on the general influence of social networks and resources available through ties (e.g., social support, social capital, access to care) on health. For example, Berkman and Syme⁴ and Seeman⁵ have demonstrated social isolation—or the lack of social network ties—poses a significant risk for mortality, independent of socioeconomic status and health behaviors (e.g., smoking, alcohol use, obesity, level of physical activity). Such results are important for public health but do not specifically speak to patient or provider interactions with health care organizations. Moreover, the exact mechanisms by which networks influence health behaviors, health outcomes (including quality of care and safety), and clinical decision-making remains unclear. We are interested in manuscripts on those topics as well as manuscripts that examine how the *structure* and *functions* of networks (e.g. social support, social influence, social engagement, person-to-person contact, access to resources) positively or negatively influence the aforementioned outcomes. The extent to which differences in network structure and function contribute to health care disparities (in utilization, availability, and outcomes) also is under-explored. Such gaps in knowledge are noteworthy given the Institute of Medicine's acknowledgment that persistent and widespread health care disparities are partially due to social determinants of health and health care.⁶ In addition to highlighting empirical research explaining how networks shape health and health care, we also are interested in publishing studies which test network-based interventions that might be beneficial for advancing health and health equity.



We welcome submission of original, empirical studies as well as literature reviews specifically focused on methods concerns. Manuscripts can use a variety of methodological approaches, including social network analysis, organizational network analysis, other quantitative methods, or mixed methods that specifically assess ties between units of analysis and the relationship of those ties to health care outcomes or variables directly relevant to health care settings.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Longitudinal studies of network dynamics over time in health care settings
- Measurement validation analysis for indicators of interpersonal relationships
- Studies assessing the importance of conversational content and frequency for subsequent behavioral decisions in a health care context
- Health care innovation diffusion studies tracing adoption of specific practices and policies across organizations
- Studies of the influence of patients' interpersonal networks on physician-patient interactions, including communication
- Network influences on behavior of health care professionals
- Studies of network structure and function as an explanation for health care disparities associated with race/ethnicity or other markers of social identity

Abstract Submission Deadline: April 1, 2017

Interested authors are asked to submit an abstract of 250 words or less to the guest editors. Each abstract will be reviewed and, if approved, authors will be invited to submit a full manuscript for consideration under a

rigorous peer review process. Abstracts and all questions should be directed to Drs. Cené (crystal_cene@med.unc.edu) or Southwell (bsouthwell@rti.org).

Journal Website: <http://www.springer.com/medicine/journal/13142>

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2. Southwell BG, Yzer MC. When (and why) interpersonal talk matters for campaigns. *Communication Theory*. 2009;19(1):1-8.
3. Christakis NA, Fowler JH. The spread of obesity in a large social network over 32 years. *The New England journal of medicine*. 2007;357(4):370-379.
4. Berkman LF, Syme SL. Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: a nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 1979;109(2):186-204.
5. Seeman TE, Kaplan GA, Knudsen L, Cohen R, Guralnik J. Social network ties and mortality among the elderly in the Alameda County Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 1987;126(4):714-723.
6. Committee on Quality of Health Care in America IoM. *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press;2001.