

*Physical Disabilities
Through the Lifespan*



Aging Issues: Neurological Disorders

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Physical Disabilities Through the Lifespan



State of the Field

- Increased lifespan for patients with neurological disorders, increasing the disabled population.
- Advanced assistive technology is available but cost is an issue.
- More effective and more types of medications are available, but cost is high due to small market share.
- Increased awareness of disability but a disconnect between advances in science and social policy.
- Increased awareness of interaction between primary and secondary conditions and the causes of disability.

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Problems/Concerns/Issues

- Clinical & outcome research: need for longitudinal data, importance of real-life measures of functionality, correlation of symptom severity w/level of disability
- Secondary conditions: fatigue, cardiac complications, etc.
- Social/economic: lack of understanding of the disconnect between impairment and disability in elderly populations, gaps in health services
- Cost: medication, assistive technologies, rehab & chronic care

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Research Priorities

- Identify the correlated factors between impairment and disability in the aging population.
- Identify the indicators of age-related onset; develop strategies for health awareness/delivery and prevention/early intervention.
- Foster longitudinal research that measures functionally meaningful outcomes in chronic conditions.
- Characterize the interrelationships between functional status and quality of life, addressing issues of fatigue, assistive technology, and gender differences.
- Integrate medical and social science of disability into health policy agendas with the goal of addressing current social/economic issues.