Purpose: Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a chronic, genetically transmitted disease that causes thickened secretions that impede mucus clearance in the gastrointestinal, respiratory, and reproductive tracts, thereby requiring daily treatments that last 1.5 hours or more (Abbott, Morton, Hurley, & Conway, 2015; Schindler, Michel, & Wilson, 2015). With recent advances in early diagnosis and treatment, life expectancy has doubled in the last 20 years placing emphasis on improving quality of life. Females consistently self-report having an overall lower quality of life across international studies; however, the individual domain scores and measurement tools vary (Dill, Dawson, Sellers, Robinson, & Sawicki, 2013; Groeneveld et al., 2012; Kir et al., 2015). Few studies have been conducted to see how gender relates to health-related quality of life (HRQoL). The purpose of this study was to examine gender differences in disease-specific HRQoL in adult patients with CF and then explore gender-specific facilitators and barriers to HRQoL.

Methods: Health-related quality of life was explored using a sequential explanatory mixed methods design. The sample included 129 adults with CF recruited from outpatient clinics and inpatient units at a tertiary care center in southeast United States. Patients reported their demographics and disease-specific HRQoL using the 50-item Cystic Fibrosis Questionnaire-Revised (CFQ-R). The scores on the CFQ-R range from zero to 100, with higher scores signifying better HRQoL. Descriptive statistics and gender differences were analyzed using SPSS Statistical Software v. 23. A subsample of 15 males and 15 females subsequently took part in a 30-45 minute, semi-structured interview to build upon the survey results and describe gender-specific facilitators and barriers to HRQoL. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s method of thematic analysis and HyperRESEARCH software.

Results: Sixty-one males and 68 females aged 19-67 were included in the preliminary results of the quantitative data. Qualitative data analysis is ongoing. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (91.5%). Females reported a better HRQoL compared to their male counterparts in the areas of body image (62.58 vs. 62.52), weight (73.04 vs. 56.50), and digestion (71.90 vs. 71.56). In the remaining 9 areas, females reported a poorer HRQoL than males, with the most drastic differences in the areas of physical functioning (53.71 vs. 66.31), social functioning (57.11 vs. 66.80), and health perceptions (55.23 vs. 63.47).

Conclusion: The preliminary results demonstrate that females who have CF have poorer HRQoL than males in some domains, but better HRQoL in others. Further analyses will be conducted to examine how gender differences in these domains interact with other clinical variables such as BMI, lung function, and \textit{P. aeruginosa} and \textit{B. cepacia} status, all of which have been shown to impact both survival and HRQoL (Abbott et al., 2015; Bodnar et al., 2014; Groeneveld et al., 2015; Moco et al., 2015). Additionally, the interview data will elaborate on the quantitative findings by identifying gender-specific facilitators and barriers to HRQoL using the participants’ rich narratives and thick descriptions of their lived experience. Study findings will offer insight into priority areas for delivery of comprehensive, individualized care that will improve the quality of life for people with CF.
Title:
Gender-Specific Facilitators and Barriers to Health-Related Quality of Life in Adults With Cystic Fibrosis

Keywords:
cystic fibrosis, health-related quality of life and mixed methods

Abstract Summary:
Cystic fibrosis is a chronic disease that causes thickened secretions requiring daily treatments lasting 1.5 hours or more. Life expectancy has increased; therefore, improving quality of life is critical. This mixed methods study examines health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and explores its gender-specific facilitators and barriers in an adult sample.

Content Outline:
Content Outline: Gender-specific Facilitators and Barriers to Health-related Quality of Life in Adults with Cystic Fibrosis

I. Introduction

A. Cystic Fibrosis is a chronic disease with no cure.

B. Life expectancy has recently doubled placing importance on health-related quality of life.

II. Body
A. Main Point #1: Methods

1. Supporting point #1: Sequential explanatory mixed methods design
   a) 129 adults recruited from a single adult cystic fibrosis center

2. Supporting point #2: Quantitative strand
   a) Demographics: Gender, age, relationship status, ethnicity, religion, education
   b) Cystic Fibrosis Questionnaire-Revised: disease-specific health-related quality of life instrument

3. Supporting point #3: Qualitative strand
   a) 30 semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30-45 minutes
   b) Braun and Clarke’s method of thematic analysis

B. Main Point #2: Results

1. Supporting point #1: 61 males and 68 females between 19 and 67 years of age
   a) Females reported a poorer health-related quality of life in 9 of 12 domains.
   b) Most drastic differences occurred in the domains of physical functioning, social functioning, and health perceptions

2. Supporting point #2: Qualitative analysis is ongoing

C. Main Point #3: Discussion/Conclusions

1. Supporting point #1: Further analysis is being conducted to see how gender differences in the Cystic Fibrosis Questionnaire-Revised domains interact with clinical variables.
   a) Clinical variables included: BMI, lung function, and *P. aeruginosa* and *B. cepacia* status. All included clinical variables have been shown to impact both survival and health-related quality of life.
   b) Interview data will elaborate on the quantitative findings by identifying gender-specific facilitators and barriers to health-related quality of life.

2. Supporting point #2: Conclusions
   a) Study findings will offer insight into priority areas for delivery of comprehensive, individualized care that will improve the quality of life for people with cystic fibrosis.

First Primary Presenting Author

**Primary Presenting Author**
Leigh Ann Bray, MSN, RN, CNL
University of Alabama at Birmingham
School of Nursing
Research Assistant/ Graduate Teaching Assistant
Professional Experience: PhD student: 2015-Present Research Assistant: 2015-Present MSN/CNL-2014 BSN- 2012 Author on five publications I have presented at local, regional, and international conferences I completed two research training programs at The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Author Summary: Leigh received her BSN in 2012 and MSN in 2014. From experience on the Pulmonary Unit, she grew to want to improve the lives of those who have cystic fibrosis through research. In 2015, she started the PhD program as a full time Colvin Scholar and research assistant. She now part of the 2016 cohort of Jonas Scholars, has been an author on 5 publications, and has presented at local, regional, and international conferences.

Second Author
Sigrid L. Ladores, PhD, RN, PNP
University of Alabama at Birmingham
School of Nursing
Assistant Professor
Birmingham AL
USA

Professional Experience: 2014-Present, Assistant Professor, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing; Birmingham, AL 2014-2014, Lecturer, University of Central Florida College of Nursing; Orlando, FL 2008-2014, Instructor, University of Central Florida College of Nursing; Orlando, FL 2004-2008, Visiting Instructor, University of Central Florida College of Nursing; Orlando, FL Record of scholarship and excellence as evidenced by multiple presentations, publications, honors and awards (i.e., presented twice at the International Nursing Research Congress of Sigma Theta Tau, and selected as the Nurse of the Year by the March of Dimes Foundation, Central Florida Chapter) Leadership skills as evidenced by my leadership roles in national and local professional organizations, and within my academic institution

Author Summary: Dr. Sigrid Ladores is a PhD-prepared pediatric nurse practitioner and nurse educator with 20 years of experience. She is an emerging leader in the area of reproductive health issues in cystic fibrosis. She has several peer-reviewed publications, and presented her research in international, national, regional, and state conferences.

Third Author
Sylvie Mrug, PhD
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Department of Psychology
Professor
Birmingham AL
USA

Professional Experience: Professor in the Department of Psychology at The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She has been a tenure track faculty at UAB since 2005. Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology Purdue University, August 2005 M.S. in Applied Statistics Purdue University, May 2004 M.S. in Clinical Psychology Purdue University, December 2001 M.A. in Clinical Psychology Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, May 1998

Author Summary: Dr. Mrug is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her research examines the interplay of risk and protective factors in the development of behavioral and emotional problems in adolescence, including antisocial behavior, substance use, depression and anxiety. She has over 30 peer-reviewed publications.

Fourth Author
Benjamin E. Burgess, BS  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Department of Psychology  
Graduate Trainee  
Birmingham AL  
USA

**Professional Experience:** 2013- Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in writing, Spring Hill College Mobile, Alabama 2015-present- Graduate Trainee, Lifespan Developmental Psychology, University of Alabama at Birmingham

**Author Summary:** Benjamin E. Burgess earned is BS in Psychology from Spring Hill College in 2013. He has been a graduate trainee in the Lifespan Developmental Psychology program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham since 2015 and has worked as a research assistant since 2015.