

**School of Social Work
COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES**

**SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES
FOR UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN**

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 1, 2012

The School of Social Work in the College of Allied Health Sciences is pleased to offer the following research project for the summer of 2012. Interested students are urged to contact the faculty member(s) directing the project that most interests them. By contacting the faculty member, you can discover more about the project, learn what your responsibilities will be and, if possible, develop a timetable for the twelve-week research period.

PROJECT TITLE: Experiences of Stroke Survivor-Spouse Dyads across the Lifespan

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Project Description

Stroke survivors and their spouses experience an array of adverse physical, social, and psychological consequences from stroke including functional limitations, social isolation, and emotional challenges like anxiety and depression. Models of coping with chronic illness suggest that couples' experiences may be different depending upon their age and/or developmental stage. Empirical studies also suggest that age may be a factor that impacts the extent to which survivors and spouses successfully cope with stroke recovery and adjust to post-stroke life. The theory of "biographical disruption" (Bury, 1982) has been put forth as a conceptual framework with which to investigate the experience of chronic illness across the lifespan. According to biographical disruption theory, chronic illness leads to a disruption with three main aspects or stages: disruptions to taken-for-granted assumptions and behaviors, disruptions to explanatory frameworks, and mobilization of resources. The purpose of this qualitative, key informant study is to examine the experiences of couples coping with stroke through the lens of biographical disruption theory.