



Dr. Ruth Tappen - Fit2Drive

It is well known that people who develop Alzheimer's disease eventually will not be able to drive safely. Many are surprised, however, to learn that people in early stages of the disease could still drive safely.

In a clinical setting, it is very difficult to determine whether an individual should continue to drive, and even harder for the patient or family to decide what to do on their own. Led by Dr. Ruth Tappen, an interdisciplinary team from FAU, including Drs. David Newman and María Ordóñez from the College of Nursing and Dr. Monica Rosselli from the College of Science, is developing a brief screening test called Fit2Drive to predict the likelihood of an individual passing a road test. Once completed, they plan to make the predictor accessible on their Fit2Drive website, currently under construction. The study is funded by the Florida Department of Health's Ed and Ethel Moore Alzheimer's Disease Research Program.

"We want people to be able to drive as long as they can do it safely but also to help them stop if they are endangering themselves and others," said Dr. Ruth Tappen, Christine E. Lynn Eminent Scholar and Professor.

Dr. Cheryl Krause-Parello – Dog-walking and Veterans with PTSD

Twenty percent of veterans suffer from PTSD, and about 6,000 die of suicide each year. Human-animal interaction is known to reduce stress, but few studies have examined the health effects of interacting with dogs. A team of researchers from four universities, led by Dr. Cheryl Krause-Parello, enlisted the help of two no-kill animal shelters for a study evaluating the effects of walking with a shelter dog on psychological and physiological stress indicators in military veterans. Dr. Krause-Parello directs Canines Providing Assistance to Wounded Warriors® (C-P.A.W.W.®) at FAU. The study was funded in part by the ISAZ/Waltham Petcare Science Institute Collaborative Research Award and C-P.A.W.W.®. Results, published in the journal *Anthrozoös*, provide evidence that walking with a shelter dog may affect psychological and physiological stress indicators in veterans – with particular potential benefits for veterans with an increase in PTSD symptom severity. The study also provided evidence that walking with a shelter dog may benefit veterans with higher symptoms of post-traumatic stress.



"C-P.A.W.W. provides a second chance at life for veterans and shelter dogs. One rescue at a time," said Dr. Cheryl Krause-Parello, Professor. "Our program gives back to those who put their lives on the line for us."

Dr. Lisa Wiese – Rural Alzheimer's Assessment

Rural residents, with less access to specialty providers, face twice the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and have poorer outcomes than individuals in cities. The risk is even higher for ethnically diverse individuals who live in rural areas. Dr. Lisa Wiese and a team of adult gerontological nurse practitioners (AGNPs) studied this disparity with funding from the Florida Department of Health's Ed and Ethel Moore Alzheimer's Disease Research Program. AGNPs visited three rural subsidized housing units where most residents are African American, Afro-



Caribbean and Hispanic to screen individuals for Alzheimer's. This approach of providing care for persons is reminiscent of the traditional home visit by the family doctor, but it is carried out by a trained AGNP, and most of the residents and their primary care providers welcomed the early detection approach. Dr. Wiese and her team will continue to offer the screening virtually for those isolated at home due to COVID-19 with support from the Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center.

Drs. Tappen, Krause-Parello and Wiese are serving vulnerable groups that have been too long overlooked. Their hands-on interventions are contributing to the profession of nursing, mentoring future researchers and answering the call to care – improving and saving lives through research.

"I feel fortunate to stand alongside nursing colleagues who are shining a light of discovery on a number of groundbreaking research areas. The College's commitment to advancing caring science and answering the call to care by serving underserved populations makes this a very fulfilling home for the work of nursing researchers," said Dr. Lisa Wiese, Assistant Professor. ■