Aging, Disability, and Long-Term Care

Aging, disability, and long-term care are becoming increasingly important societal and policy issues as the number of older people increases and families become smaller and more dispersed. RTI International conducts research on many aspects of aged care—quality of care, long-term care services and financing, the intersection of medical and long-term care services, and integrated care models. Our research focuses on improving government and private programs that serve older people and younger persons with disabilities.

Overview
The world’s population is aging rapidly. In the United States, the number of people aged 65 and over will almost double by 2050, and the number of people aged 85 and older will more than triple. Similar changes are occurring in many Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia. With aging comes increasing prevalence of chronic illnesses and disabilities and the associated demand for medical care and long-term services and support. Fundamental issues for families, government policy makers, and service providers include how to organize and finance services and how to ensure high-quality care.

RTI provides research, evaluation, and technical assistance on a wide range of issues concerning aged care. These activities are designed to provide information about the needs of people with dementia and other impairments, long-term care service systems, the cost and effectiveness of government programs, the quality of services, and options for innovation and reform in the public and private sector.

Areas of Expertise
Our researchers conduct quantitative and qualitative research, policy analysis, and technical assistance in the following areas:

- International and domestic institutional and community-based long-term care
- Integrated care models and the intersection of medical and long-term care services
- Determinants of disability and long-term care use
- Alzheimer’s disease and dementia
- Long-term care workforce
- Quality measures and quality assurance systems
- Assessment instruments to determine eligibility, care needs, and quality of care

Selected Project Highlights
Long-Term Care Services
Design, Data Collection, and Analysis of the National Survey of Residential Care Facilities: Funded by several agencies—including the National Center for Health Statistics and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS’) Office of the Assistant Secretary for
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Planning and Evaluation—these projects involved designing and conducting the first nationally representative survey of residential care facilities, such as assisted living facilities. RTI also analyzed the survey to assess hospital use by people with Alzheimer’s disease, the characteristics of Medicaid-participating facilities and residents, and the relationship between resident needs and services offered and used.

Long-Term Care Financing
Survey of Long-Term Care Awareness and Planning: Funded by the HHS’ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, RTI designed and conducted this survey to assess the degrees to which Americans (1) are aware of their risk of needing long-term care and (2) are planning accordingly. Using survey data, RTI conducted a discrete choice experiment designed to assess preferences for particular features of public and private long-term care insurance.

Intersection of Medical Care and Long-Term Care
Evaluation of State Demonstrations to Integrate Care for Dual-Eligible Individuals: Funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), this project monitors and evaluates a large initiative that is testing the integration of medical and long-term care for low-income older people and younger persons with disabilities. The initiative involves demonstrations in 11 states and primarily uses capitated Medicare and Medicaid payments to managed care organizations, providing the full range of services. Care coordination is expected to improve health outcomes, reduce health care utilization, and improve beneficiary experience. The evaluation includes site visits, beneficiary focus groups, and analysis of Medicare and Medicaid claims and nursing home resident assessment data to evaluate the impact of the demonstrations on quality of care, access to care, service utilization, and costs.

International Long-Term Care
Informing Policy Options for Aged Care in China: In a series of projects commissioned by the World Bank, RTI provided subject matter expertise and consultation on aged care policy developments in China at both the national and local government levels. RTI developed several policy papers addressing key issues related to long-term care provision, financing, and quality assurance by drawing on international experiences and their implications as well as lessons for China.

Integration of Disability Policy and Programs in the Social Protection and Poverty Sector Framework Document: Requested by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), RTI staff members provided expert input on how disability-focused policy and programs can be integrated into the IDB’s Social Protection and Poverty Sector Framework Document, with the goal of improving the lives of people with disabilities in Latin America.

Quality Measures and Quality Assurance Systems
Nursing Home Quality Measures: Funded by CMS, this project analyzes the reliability and validity of nursing home quality measures and develops new measures for public reporting and regulatory monitoring. Measures are assessed primarily by analyzing the Minimum Data Set, a mandatory resident assessment instrument, and Medicare claims.

Individual Assessment Instruments
Development of the Comprehensive Assessment Reporting Evaluation Tool: Funded by CMS, this project developed a single assessment instrument to provide consistent clinical and functional information about individuals across a wide range of post-acute care providers for care planning, quality measurement, and reimbursement purposes.

More Information
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