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Public Policy Matters: The Role of Human Factors in Home Health Care

By Daryle Gardner-Bonneau

In 2000, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies released its report, *To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System*, which had a huge impact on the public and specifically on the human factors/ergonomics community. That report highlighted the many serious errors that occur daily in hospitals across the nation and led to many HF/E efforts designed to reduce the error rate in hospitals, or at least to reduce the consequences of errors.

In the years following the IOM report, various attempts were made to consider medical errors outside the hospital setting, but no concerted effort was made to look more broadly at the human factors issues in home health care. The IOM report itself had focused clearly on the *safety* aspect of medical care in institutions; it had much less to say about three other major goals of human factors/ergonomics – *effectiveness, efficiency, and user satisfaction*.

Increasingly, health care is occurring outside formal institutions. Patients are being discharged from hospitals sooner, and sicker, than in the past. Because of the never-ending march of technology, more health care and health information can be delivered remotely, through telemedicine and other technology, and more complex medical equipment is being placed in homes. Further, patients and their families are taking more responsibility for their health care, and information seeking about health care management by lay caregivers and patients has skyrocketed.

The nation’s demographics are also changing; older adults constitute an ever-greater proportion of the population and make the greatest use of health care resources. Middle-aged people are caring for aging parents; friends and neighbors often care for older adults who are living alone, trying to maintain their independence. Children and adults with chronic conditions and disabilities are receiving care at home. There are significant and widening disparities in health care access attributed to the “digital divide” and socioeconomic and cultural factors. We seem to have left relatively unexplored the human factors issues associated with these sweeping changes.

Between 2004 and 2007, I made several presentations stressing the gaps in our knowledge about, and management of, these issues. One of these was at the invitation of the Committee on Human-Systems Integration (COHSI) of the Division of Be-

havioral and Social Sciences and Education of the National Research Council. Soon after, COHSI convened a planning meeting of interested parties, including HFES member Kerm Henriksen, human factors advisor for patient safety at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Attendees agreed that a study should be conducted to address these issues. AHRQ responded with funding for a first phase of the work, and the Committee on the Role of Human Factors in Home Healthcare was established.

The committee, which met for the first time in March 2009, is chaired by David Wegman and comprises a broad spectrum of experts, including health care professionals, policy experts, and human factors specialists. I currently serve on the committee, along with HFES members Sara Czaja and Robert Schumacher. As is typical in these initial meetings, we began by discussing the committee’s charge and reaching a common understanding of the fundamental terminology being used to describe it. In this case, the *home* is being considered as any health care setting outside formal health care institutions. So, in addition to patients receiving care in the home, a patient using a CPAP machine in a hotel room would be considered, for example, as would a person using a portable oxygen delivery system at work.

Similarly, *health care* has been broadly defined in the charge to include any behaviors involved in managing health and well-being across the life span; therefore, prevention and health maintenance activities are considered along with activities involved in the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic conditions and those involved in end-of-life care. The charge also defines caregivers broadly, so the committee is exploring the human factors issues faced by both formal caregivers (e.g., home health nurses, physical therapists working in home care settings) and caregivers with little or no formal training (e.g., many patients, family caregivers, and friends, neighbors, and others in the community at large).

Finally, *human factors* is being considered in its broadest sense, as specified in the committee’s charge, to include not only the human-technology interfaces but also the organizational, social, and cultural human factors that affect the effectiveness, efficiency, and user satisfaction with which human beings manage their health.

HF in Home Health Care . . .*(continued from page 1)*

Much of the first months of the committee's work involved preparations for a workshop to gather information and data about the human factors issues in home health care. Workshop topic areas were determined: (a) recipients of care and formal and informal caregivers; (b) health care tasks, medical devices, and information technology; and (c) environmental considerations – the immediate health care setting and the social, organizational, cultural, and policy and regulatory environments in which care takes place. Experts in these topics were invited to develop papers and to give presentations at the workshop in early October 2009. HFES members who gave presentations at the workshop were Neil Charness, Colin Drury, and Molly Follette Story. The formal report of this workshop will be released to the public in a few months, but the workshop presentations are available [here](#).

The committee has now received funding for a second phase of work, which is intended to produce a consensus report about the role of HF/E in home health care. As with all reports published by the National Academies, the draft of this report will undergo extensive internal and external review and editing prior to its release to the public. The target date for consensus report publication is sometime in 2011.

We live in an age when people are taking more control of their health – not only because they must but because they desire to do so – and maintaining one's health and well-being is a life-long activity, with various human factors challenges along the way. Access to information and technology is becoming an "anyone, any time, anywhere" proposition. This applies to health care as well as most other aspects of our lives. The Committee on the Role of Human Factors in Home Healthcare hopes to illuminate these challenges and to make human-factors-related recommendations that will lead to productive activities designed with the goal of improving the management of people's health – by all people, throughout their lives, and in any setting.

References

- Institute of Medicine (2001). *To err is human: Building a safer health system*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Gardner-Bonneau, D. J. (2007, August). *Human factors issues in home health care*. Presentation to the Committee on Human-Systems Integration, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies, Woods Hole, MA.

Daryle Gardner-Bonneau, PhD (jdbonneau@charter.net) is the principal of Bonneau and Associates, 2264 Quincy Ave., Portage, MI 49024-4806, and an HFES Fellow. For the past 15 years her work has focused on the design of health care and telecommunications products, systems, and services to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. She is active in technical standards work and was recently named to the National Research Council's Committee on the Role of Human Factors in Home Healthcare.

NIH Issues Information Request for New Health Care Funding

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is offering a rare opportunity for behavioral/social scientists doing fundamental work related to health and health care systems to help determine how NIH budgets a new \$120 million to be awarded over the next 4-5 years. In setting the agenda, NIH plans a series of steps beginning with a widely distributed request for information (RFI) issued with a *very short deadline of February 19*. The initial NIH funding comes via the Recovery Act, which mandates spending by September 30.

After receiving input in response to this RFI, NIH will continue to interact with the scientific community in shaping requests for applications targeted for this July or August (for FY 2011 funding). However, it is important to note that the impact of this initial RFI will extend well beyond the 2011 allocation, as it will help NIH define the overall program agenda. If HF/E is to be represented, it behooves those working in this general area to respond to the current request for comments, and to do so in strict conformance with the format provided in the NIH announcement. If you respond to this call, please cc the HFES Government Relations Committee at hfes-gr@hfes.org.

You can find information about the new fund on the [Basic Behavioral & Social Science Opportunity Network \(OppNet\)](#) Web site. View the announcement [here](#).

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Submissions Welcomed for Special Issue on Health Care

By Daniel G. Morrow & Francis T. Durso, Special Issue Editors

The *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied (JEPA)* is seeking manuscripts that address issues related to applied experimental psychology and human performance in all aspects of health care.

Human error and safety in health care systems has been a focus of national concern since the 1999 Institute of Medicine report. That report also emphasized the critical role of human factors issues as both a contributor to medical error that threatens safety and as an approach to mitigating error and improving safety. Theories and methods related to human performance and cognition have played an increasingly important role in guiding research related to health care, error, and system safety.

We invite manuscripts that describe empirical research that investigates any aspect of health care with implications for understanding and improving health care processes and practices.

An ideal submission will describe work that meets the following criteria:

1. The work is motivated by and contributes to theories of human performance (relevant to cognitive or other psychological processes).
2. The work is experimental in the sense that it provides evidence for causal influences underlying the findings and provides the reader some certainty in the interpretation of the causal influences; multiexperiment studies may be important for providing such evidence. Observational methods may also be appropriate, so long as the study design provides compelling suggestions of causal factors.
3. The work produces findings that have immediate and obvious practical relevance. Employing participants (e.g., providers or patients) and tasks that are representative of actual health care contexts are especially sought.

Topics of interest for the special issue are not constrained and might include the impact of information technology on practitioner workload, evaluation of the design of health care displays (e.g., patient monitoring), impact of operator factors (e.g., fatigue, situation awareness) or task-related factors (e.g., interruptions) on error or other aspects of performance, teamwork processes in critical care, or patient self-care.

If you are interested in contributing to this special issue, please e-mail both of the editors for the special issue, Dan Morrow (dgm@illinois.edu) and Frank Durso (frank.durso@gatech.edu), by **May 15, 2010**. Include a tentative title and brief summary of the planned manuscript. The letter of intent is optional. All solicited manuscripts will be peer-reviewed and required to meet the standards of any *JEPA* manuscript. The deadline for submissions is **September 1, 2010**. The special issue will be published in mid-2011.

Papers should be submitted through the [JEPA online Web portal](#). Please indicate in your cover letter that you wish for the paper to be considered as part of the special issue on Human Performance in Health Care.

Proposals Invited for Eighth Annual HPEE Meeting

By Jason Kring, HPEE President

The [Society for Human Performance in Extreme Environments \(HPEE\)](#) is seeking proposals for its Eighth Annual Meeting at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco on September 26-27, 2010. The meeting will precede the [HFES 54th Annual Meeting](#) in the same location.

Researchers, practitioners working in applied domains, and students are encouraged to submit proposals for lecture, poster, or discussion panel presentations. Proposals may be empirically based, theoretically based, or application based.

HPEE defines extreme environments as settings that possess extraordinary physical, psychological, and interpersonal demands that require significant human adaptation for survival and performance. Example settings and domains include spaceflight, high-altitude aviation, mountaineering, and polar, desert, and underwater environments. In addition, we address specific occupations and activities occurring in extreme environments, such as military operations, police operations, firefighting, emergency response/disaster management, hazardous materials handling/disposal, search and rescue, emergency medical services, and extreme recreational activities.

The deadline for proposals is **April 30, 2010**. Please visit the [annual meeting page](#) to view the Call for Proposals. Additional information, including a preliminary agenda of papers and invited addresses, will be posted in late spring. For more information, contact meeting Cochair Joseph Crimi at joseph.crimi@gmail.com or HPEE at society@hpee.org.

Proposals Due for HFES 2010

The deadline for submissions for the [HFES 54th Annual Meeting](#) in San Francisco is **Friday, February 19**. To submit your work, view the [Call for Proposals page](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deadline for HFES Awards Nominations Is March 31

Each year during the HFES Annual Meeting, the Society honors outstanding persons who have made significant contributions to the human factors/ergonomics discipline. Nominations are due on or before **March 31**, and nominees are not required to be HFES members.

To nominate an award candidate,

- submit the candidate's résumé or curriculum vitae, a nominating letter, and at least two and not more than three letters of support from individuals who know the candidate well

enough to assess his or her candidacy in terms of the award's criteria; and

- send all nomination packages to HFES, c/o Lynn Strother, P.O. Box 1369, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1369, or lynn@hfes.org. E-mail submissions are strongly preferred; please submit the package as a single file in PDF format.

For more information about the awards, view the [HFES awards Web page](#).

Volunteers Needed for Community Service Project

Planning is under way for many exciting new networking opportunities at the 2010 HFES Annual Meeting in San Francisco, September 27 to October 1. Looking ahead, the Society is also developing ideas for 2011 and beyond. We are seeking a group of motivated individuals who would be willing to lead the development of a community-oriented service project that volunteers would begin planning as soon as possible, which would be carried out at the 2011 and/or future meetings. Some of the possibilities already under consideration are a Habitat for Humanity project, service at a local food bank, or a 5K charity run, but other opportunities and ideas may also be explored. This project would promote networking while giving back to the local community.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this project, please contact Kermit Davis (Kermit.davis@uc.edu) or Carlos de Falla (carlos@hfes.org).

Meritorious Research Service Commendation Nominations Sought

The APA Board of Scientific Affairs (BSA) is soliciting nominations for the Meritorious Research Service Commendation. This commendation recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to psychological science through their service as employees of the federal government, private foundations, and professional societies.

Contributions are defined according to service to the field that directly or indirectly advances opportunities and resources for psychological science. This may include staff at federal, regulatory, or nonprofit agencies. BSA will consider a broad range of employers/organizations, and the board will consider nominees from the nonprofit sector.

Nominees may be active or retired but ordinarily will have a minimum of 10 years of such service. The individual's personal scholarly achievements (i.e., research, teaching, and writing) are not considered in the selection process independent of their service contributions.

When submitting a nomination, please provide the following:

- A letter (maximum two pages) of nomination that describes and supports the individual's contributions (e.g., nature of his or her service to psychological science, positions held, program development activities)
- A curriculum vitae
- Three letters of support from scientists, at least two of which should be from outside the nominee's organization

Submit nominations by **March 1** to Suzanne Wandersman at swandersman@apa.org. For a list of past recipients, view the [Meritorious Research Service Commendation page](#) of the [APA Web site](#).

Nominations Due for IEA Awards

By *William S. Marras, IEA Representatives Committee Chair*

Nominations for the following IEA awards are due at the HFES Central Office on **March 1**:

- IEA/Liberty Mutual Prize and Medal in Ergonomics and Occupational Safety
- IEA Fellow Award

HFES members are encouraged to nominate HFES Fellows for the IEA Fellow Award, as HFES endorsement for this award requires that nominees fit these criteria. Additional information about the award, the nomination form, and the list of past recipients can be found at the [IEA Web site](#).

Send a PDF of a completed nomination form, a copy of the nominee's current CV, and at least two letters of endorsement to HFES Executive Director Lynn Strother, lynn@hfes.org.

MEMBERSHIP

Take Advantage of Your Benefits!

As an HFES member, you are no doubt aware of many of the benefits of membership, such as complimentary subscriptions to our regular publications and discounts on books, proceedings, and standards. But did you know that there are many other benefits available to you? All HFES members are entitled to the following:

- Discounted registration and workshop fees for the HFES Annual Meeting
- Free online access to the HFES Digital Library-Archive
- Access to the members-only [HFES Career Center](#) for confidential résumé posting and job searching, and the On-Site Career Center at the Annual Meeting
- Consultants Directory for individuals and companies (for Full Members, Fellows, and Honorary Fellows)
- Opportunity to nominate yourself or colleagues for Awards and Fellows
- 20% off software, workload assessment tools, data analysis tools, and other products from the Human Systems Information Analysis Center (formerly CSERIAC)
- 15% off Taylor & Francis and CRC Press books and subscriptions to *Ergonomics*
- 15% off John Wiley & Sons books and other resources
- 15% off selected books from Academic Press
- Discounts on car rentals from Hertz, Alamo, and National

Take advantage of *all* your membership benefits, and tell your friends and colleagues who have an interest in human factors/ergonomics that HFES membership is an excellent value. Let them know that they can apply online at <http://hfes.org>.

The *Guardian* Launches World Government Data Portal

The [Guardian's Web site](#) now features a new portal for access to government data from around the world. Dubbed World Government Data, the site provides links to government data sites from the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Go to the newspaper's [World Government Data page](#) to see what is available.

Oprah Highlights Distracted Driving Issues

The Oprah Show recently aired an episode, "America's New Deadly Obsession," on the dangers of driving while texting or using a cell phone. Viewers of the show have been asked to sign Oprah's No Phone Zone Pledge to help put an end to distracted driving. View the episode [here](#).

CALENDAR

Poster Submissions Sought for AHFE 2010

The 3rd International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics (AHFE) is seeking proposals for poster presentations. The event, which takes place in Miami, Florida, on July 17-20, 2010, will be held jointly with the 1st International Conference on Human Factors and Ergonomics in Health Care, 1st International Conference on Cross-Cultural Decision Making, 1st International Conference on Neuroergonomics, 1st International Conference on Applied Digital Human Modeling, and the 13th International Conference on Human Aspects of Advanced Manufacturing.

The deadline for poster proposal submissions is *April 15*. Please submit your proposal online at the [AHFE 2010 Web site](#).

Featured Event Notices

5th Annual Regional Human Factors Conference, February 27, 2010, California State University Long Beach. HFES CSULB Student Chapter. Contact Paige Bacon at paigebacon86@gmail.com.

Engineering to Improve the Operations of Manufacturing Enterprises – A National Symposium, May 13, 2010, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society 54th Annual Meeting, September 27–October 1, 2010, Hyatt Regency San Francisco, Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, CA.

Other Meetings

March 2010

BRIMS 2010 – 19th Annual Conference on Behavior Representation in Modeling Simulation, March 22–25, Charleston Harbor Resort and Marina, Charleston, SC.

CWUAT – 5th Cambridge Workshop on Universal Access and Assistive Technology, March 22–25, Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK.

9th Conference of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology, March 29–31, Pontifical Urbaniana University, Rome, Italy.

April 2010

CHI 2010 – ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, April 10–15, Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Atlanta, GA.

Fifth International Workshop on Model Driven Development of Advanced User Interfaces, April 10–11, organized at CHI 2010, Atlanta, GA.

SpringSim'10 – 2010 Spring Simulation Multiconference, April 11–15, Florida Hotel and Conference Center, Orlando, FL.

Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors Annual Conference 2010, April 13–15, Keele University, Staffordshire, UK.

IETC 2010 – 10th International Educational Technology Conference, April 26–28, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey. Deadline for submissions: March 15, 2010.

1st International Congress on Health and Safety in the Workplace, April 28–30, Universidad Nacional de Colombia – Sede Palmira, Palmira, Colombia. Contact Congress Coordinator Ciro Martínez Oropesa at cmartinezo@palmira.unal.edu.co. (Spanish-language conference.)

European Conference on Human Centred Design for Intelligent Transport Systems, April 29–30, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Berlin, Germany.

May 2010

International Conference on Fall Prevention and Protection, May 18–20, West Virginia University Erickson Alumni Center, Morgantown, WV.

World Conference on Quality and Improvement, May 24–26, America's Center, St. Louis, MO.

ISG 2010 – International Society for Gerontechnology 7th World Conference, May 27–30, Marriott Pinnacle Hotel, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

June 2010

2010 Society for Environmental Graphic Design Conference, June 2–5, Gaylord Convention Center, National Harbor, MD.

Institute of Industrial Engineers Annual Conference and Expo 2010, June 5–9, Fiesta Americana Grand Coral Beach Hotel, Cancun, Mexico.

HPAS 2010 – International Conference on Human Performance at Sea, June 16–18, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK.

July 2010

AHFE International 2010 – 3rd International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics, July 17–20, Intercontinental Hotel, Miami, FL.

August 2010

APCHI & Ergofuture 2010 – Joint International Conference of Asia Pacific Computer Human Interaction and Ergofuture, August 3–5, Sanur Paradise Plaza Hotel and Suites, Denpasar Bali, Indonesia. Contact ergofuture2010@yahoo.com.

ICCM 2010 – 10th International Conference on Cognitive Modeling, August 5–8, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA. Deadline for submissions: Tutorials, February 20, 2010; Doctoral consortium submissions, papers, posters, and symposia, April 13, 2010.

ECCE 2010 – European Conference on Cognitive Ergonomics, August 25–27, Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands. Deadline for doctoral consortium submissions, extended abstracts, posters, and demonstration papers: April 1, 2010.

October 2010

Sixth Triennial International Aircraft Fire and Cabin Safety Research Conference, October 25–28, Atlantic City, NJ. Deadline for submission of abstracts: April 1, 2010.

November 2010

International Conference on Commercial Driver Health and Wellness, November 8–10, Baltimore, MD, Transportation Research Board. Deadline for submission of abstracts: April 9, 2010.

April 2011

ODAM 2011 – 10th International Symposium on Human Factors in Organisational Design and Management, April 18–20, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. Contact Conference Chair Matthias Goebel at m.goebel@ru.ac.za.

Short Courses

Harvard School of Public Health, Center for Continuing Professional Education, 677 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA, 02115, 617/384-8692. contedu@hsph.harvard.edu.

- **Safety in Design and Construction: A Lifestyle Approach**, February 22–26, 2010, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA.

Ohio State University, **Institute for Ergonomics**, 1971 Neil Ave., 210 Baker Systems, Columbus, OH, 43210, 614/292-4565. ergonomics@osu.edu.

- **Putting Ergonomics Into Practice**, Spring: May 18–21, 2010, Columbus, OH.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Public Health, P.O. Box 16248, Chapel Hill, NC, 27516-6248, 888/235-3320. osherc@unc.edu, <http://osherc.sph.unc.edu/ce.htm>.


- **Short Courses in Occupational Safety, Session IV: Supervisors and Safety Issues**, April 19–23, 2010, Chapel Hill, NC.
- **Short Courses in Occupational Safety, Session V: Hazard Recognition and Fixing the Problems**, May 18–20, 2010, Chapel Hill, NC.

Tufts University School of Medicine, Health Communication Program, 145 Harrison Ave., Boston, MA, 02111, 617/636-3539.

- **Summer Institute on Web Strategies for Health Communication**, July 18–23, 2010, Arthur M. Sackler Center for Health Communications, Boston, MA.

To submit Calendar items, send details to scott@hfes.org.

Bulletin



Volume 53, Number 2 February 2010

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The HFES Bulletin (ISSN 1527-3660) is published 12 times a year by the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, 1124 Montana Ave., Suite B, Santa Monica, CA 90403 USA. Address inquiries and address changes to HFES, P.O. Box 1369, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1369 USA, 310/394-1811, fax 310/394-2410, <http://hfes.org>.

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