

Bishop, Mark

*Department of Physical Therapy
University of Florida, College of Public Health and
Health Professionals*

*2004 Program
New Investigator (3-year project)*

Project Title: The Link Between Smoking and Recovery from Frailty in Older Floridians

Project Summary: The decrease in mobility and loss of independence in activities of daily living that is caused by tobacco-related conditions, including heart disease, stroke and primary pulmonary dysfunction, results in functional decline in older persons. Functional decline, the resulting physical frailty and loss of independence are burdens on society and the healthcare system of the United States that are rapidly increasing as the population ages. These burdens are especially manifest in Florida. In this proposal, the investigators seek to explore the ramifications of a history of tobacco use to older, frail Floridians. The long-term goal of this study is to improve the method of creating individualized rehabilitation programs that will successfully return older Floridians affected by tobacco-related diseases to, and maintain them at, a higher level of independent living. This series of experiments has four main aims: First, to identify the patterns of coexisting medical pathology in elders who are fallers or at risk of falling, based on smoking history. Second, to determine if there is a difference in the potential for improvement of balance, strength and functional walking among elders related to their smoking history. Third, to identify strategies that will increase adherence to exercise programs designed to improve balance and strength. The fourth aim is to determine the feasibility of incorporating any of the testing, exercise prescription and exercise adherence strategies identified to improve balance after 12 weeks of a home exercise program, into an existing clinical practice setting. These four aims will be explored through a series of three experiments.