

# Graduate Education in Gerontology at the University of Waterloo

**John P. Hirdes, Ph.D.**

Professor

Dept of Health Studies & Gerontology

University of Waterloo

Waterloo, Ontario

Canada

# Degrees Offered

## ■ Undergraduate

- Certificate in Gerontology (now eliminated)
- Gerontology Minor

## ■ Masters

- Original Program (first offered in 1989)
  - MA in Gerontology Broad focus
  - Joint M.Sc. in home discipline + gerontology
  - Undergraduate
- Revised Program (since 1999)
  - MSc in Health Studies and Gerontology
    - 38 graduates
    - Average time to complete: 2 years

# Degrees Offered

## ■ Masters

- Typical course sequence
  - Interdisciplinary, integrative seminar
  - Multivariate statistics
  - Program evaluation
  - Epidemiology
  - Health information management for aging populations
  - Elective
- Thesis

# Examples of Thesis Topics

## ■ Masters

- Depression and anxiety in nursing home residents
- End of life care
- Outcomes in geriatric psychiatry
- Mammography and clinical breast examinations in elderly home care clients
- Pain and restraint use in chronic hospitals
- Acute care service use among elderly home care clients
- Eligibility criteria for long term care placement
- Care, costs and quality of life in community and institutional long term care settings
- Advanced directives and competence
- Determinants of drug utilization in nursing homes

# Degrees Offered

## ■ Doctoral

- Existing PhD in Health Studies and Gerontology
  - Three “streams”, one of which is aging
  - 8 graduates
  - Average time to complete: 4 years
- Proposal for Collaborative PhD Program in Aging, Health and Well-being
  - Draws students from all departments in Faculty of Applied Health Sciences
    - Health Studies and Gerontology
    - Kinesiology
    - Recreation and Leisure Studies

# Examples of Thesis Topics

## ■ Doctoral

- Health information systems
- Evaluating quality of community care
- Medication use in the Chinese elderly
- Aluminum in drinking water and dementia
- Case-mix systems for home care
- Older drivers and fatal motor vehicle crashes
- Risks factors and interventions for falls
- Daily physical activity and Type 2 diabetes
- Environmental factors and delirium

# International Collaborations in Graduate Education at UW

- **Research focus**
  - Many students do research related to interRAI assessments
  - Graduate student research links to research agenda of 24 country network
  - Health informatics emerging as a major focus
- **Faculty members from other universities on graduate committees**
  - E.g., Brant Fries, University of Michigan, committee member for three PhD students at UW
- **Doctoral and Post-doctoral “exchange”**
  - Student does Masters/PhD at UW, goes to colleague’s university to do next degree/training program

# interRAI Countries

[www.interrai.org](http://www.interrai.org)

## Nordic Countries

Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland

## North America

Canada  
US



## Europe

Netherlands, Germany,  
Switzerland,  
France, UK  
Italy, Spain,  
Czech Republic, Estonia

## Middle East

Israel

## Pacific Rim

Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong,  
Australia, New Zealand