The Enabling Mobility in the Community Laboratory conducts community-based research to bridge the gap between services offered to people with disabilities through rehabilitation and in the community. Strong methodological approaches are implemented to examine community-based interventions promoting health, decreasing secondary conditions, and improving physical fitness for people with disabilities that can be offered post-rehabilitation to enhance the participation of people with disabilities in major life activities. The primary study population is people with lower leg mobility limitations (including but not limited to spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, and cerebral palsy).

Examples of current studies in the lab include implementing interventions to train manual wheelchair users in propulsion biomechanics using motor learning principles, developing and testing a device (computer controlled wheelchair dynamometer) for use with manual wheelchair users for wheelchair training and exercise, assessing the effectiveness of a 12-week community-based exercise program for people with disabilities and examining the duration and intensity of exercise programs to change the overall physical fitness of people with disabilities.

Questions explored in laboratory
1. How can we build community-based programs to increase the participation and health of people with disabilities?
2. What duration and intensity of exercise is necessary to impact long-term health outcomes in people with disabilities?
3. Can we develop tools to test physical exertion and physical capacity in people with disabilities?
4. How can we improve technology to engage people with disabilities in fitness and exercise programs?
5. How can we explore the role of competitive sports in community re-integration of people with disabilities?

Contributions to rehabilitation science
The focus of Dr. Morgan’s research is to generate empirical knowledge helpful for guiding community-based and person-based interventions that improve the participation of people with mobility impairments. Her work ranges from community-based participation studies to basic mechanistic studies of biomechanics of the upper extremity for manual wheelchair users during propulsion.

Earlier in her career, Dr. Morgan assisted with the development and testing of standardized measures that assess the quality of participation in major life activities and the environmental facilitators and barriers impacting participation for people with disabilities. In addition, she created a community-based program housed in a local Independent Living Center that provides services for people with disabilities (such as health and wellness programs and assistive technology assessments and training). Dr. Morgan also developed a device (an instrumented wheelchair roller system) to provide health-care professionals evidence-based options for providing wheelchair training and exercise programs.

Current and recent funding

**Title:** Exercise training in a community-based setting for people with spinal cord injuries

**Principal Investigator:** Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP

**Funding Source:** Craig H. Nielsen Foundation, Psychosocial Research Grants

**Project Period:** 4/30/17-4/29/19

**Total Award:** $199,844

**Title:** Building capacity to improve community participation for people aging with long-term disability through evidence-based strategies

**Principal Investigator:** Suzy Stark, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

**Co-Investigator:** Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP

**Funding Source:** 90DP1C0001 DHHS ACL: NIDILRR Disability Research Projects Community Living & Participation

**Project Period:** 9/30/17-09/29/22

**Total Award:** $2,482,013

**Title:** Efficacy of wheelchair propulsion

**Principal Investigator:** Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP

**Funding Source:** HealthSouth Corporation

**Project Period:** 11/1/17-10/31/18

**Total Award:** $8,494

Representative publications


**Link to NLM publications:** http://bit.ly/morgan-NLM