Key questions defining research program:
1) Assessment of data from a one hour self-study module on pain evaluation and management in the older adult with dementia to evaluate the between-groups differences in knowledge/skills, attitudes and/or confidence at the beginning and end of a week-long course for medical students focusing on geriatric medical issues.

2) The primary aim of this ongoing 7-site prospective cohort study is to develop algorithms usable in the clinical setting that predict decompressive laminectomy (DL) outcomes (i.e., success vs. failure) in older adults with lumbar spinal stenosis (LSS), the most common indication for spine surgery in older patients.

Key words describing research program
1) pain evaluation, dementia
2) decompressive laminectomy outcomes, lumbar spinal stenosis

Titles for shovel-ready research projects
1) Efficacy of an E-learning Module on Pain and Dementia in Improving Medical Student Knowledge, Attitudes and Confidence
2) Toward Optimizing Decompressive Laminectomy Outcomes: Looking Outside the Spine

Data sources for shovel-ready research projects
1) Self-study modules have been created by our NIDA-funded Center of Excellence in Pain Education and there is data to be managed and analyzed

2) Two hundred fifty patients with symptomatic LSS scheduled to undergo DL without fusion and who have no dementia, spinal instability, or prior lumbar surgery are being recruited and will be followed for one year after undergoing DL. The following baseline data are being collected within 30 days prior to DL: 1) SS symptoms with the Brigham Spinal Stenosis questionnaire (BSS, the most specific available LSS measurement tool); 2) musculoskeletal comorbidities (scoliosis, kyphosis, hip osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia symptoms, severity of spinal stenosis, degenerative disc and facet disease); 3) mood (depression [with the PHQ-9], anxiety [with the GAD-7]); 4) cognitive function (normal vs. mild cognitive impairment with the QMCI); 5) psychological function (fear-avoidance beliefs [with the Fear Avoidance Beliefs Questionnaire], chronic pain self-efficacy [with the Chronic Pain Self-Efficacy Scales], dysfunctional pain coping skills [with the Cognitive Strategies Questionnaire], treatment expectancy, illicit substance use, alcohol use, smoking status, PTSD symptoms); 6) medical comorbidity (including BMI); 7) demographic factors (age, gender, race, educational/marital status).