Faculty Focus:
Yue Li, Ph.D.

What does your research focus on?

I am a health services researcher with major focuses on Medicare and state Medicaid policies, and their impacts on the quality, outcomes, and access to care for older adults. My current research includes: 1) quality and outcome assessment for hospital care and long-term care (e.g., nursing home care and community-based long-term care); 2) impact of Medicare payment reforms such as bundled payments on health care quality and outcomes; and 3) disparities in the delivery and quality of health care.

Why did you choose to do research in public and community health?

Health services research studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviors affect access to health care and the quality and cost of health care. Medicare finances health care for individuals in the US who are aged ≥65 years, select individuals with disabilities aged <65 years, and individuals with end-stage renal disease. In addition, Medicaid plays a vital role in funding the health care safety net, such as hospitals, community health centers, and long-term care providers. Policy and coverage changes in the two national programs will significantly affect the welfare of older adults in need of care of different types. I was interested in public health in general as a college student; during my graduate training, I had the luck to work (in a very fun way) in a team on several projects addressing health services issues for older adults, which led me to the area I am in now.

What do you enjoy most about University of Rochester?

The University of Rochester provides a collaborative environment and ample opportunities to work with researchers (faculty and students) of diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

What opportunities are there for students to engage in your projects, both current and future?

I am currently leading several research projects on health care for older adults. The first project, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), aims to use big data and statistical machine learning methods to analyze the violent death data and medical records of patients from the CDC and the CMS, in order to identify the risk and protective factors for suicide deaths among older adults in long-term care settings. The second project is funded by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and is designed to determine the impact of state home- and community-based service (HCBS) payment policies on health outcomes of dementia patients, including rural-urban, racial/ethnic, and income disparities in these health outcomes.

I am also collaborating on several other funded research projects such as 1) a project that aims to determine the effect of the CJR (Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement) model on racial and SES disparities in the utilization and outcomes of lower extremity joint replacement procedures; 2) another project that tests the impact of state regulations on safety culture and safety outcomes in assisted living residences; and 3) a recent project designed to focus on Medicare ACOs (accountable care organizations) and their impact on surgical outcomes and post-acute care use.

Students trained with health services research methods and quantitative skills are always needed. Students with interest in research of any of these above topics (or similar topics) are definitely welcome to contact me .