

# Leveraging Secondary Data to Study "Prehabilitation"



**Jenni Seale Reiff, PhD, OTR/L**  
**Assistant Professor**  
**Geriatrics and Gerontology**  
**Emory University, School of Medicine**

Tuesday, March 3 2026  
12:00 – 1:00 PM  
BMI Classroom 4004  
Woodruff Memorial Research Building

Or

Join us on Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/96784413982>



**EMORY**  
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**Department of  
Biomedical Informatics**  
Emory University School of Medicine

**Abstract:** Preoperative rehabilitation, or prehabilitation, is an emerging preventive approach to rehabilitation service delivery that is intended to prepare patients physiologically, psychologically, and logistically to recover well from an anticipated elective surgery. While prehabilitation has been broadly recommended to support vulnerable populations such as older adults and cancer patients in preparing for elective surgery, small underpowered sample sizes in trial and pilot data limit capacity to assess both effectiveness and generalizability, resulting in a lack of consensus regarding an optimal prehabilitation protocol. There is growing interest in trying to leverage secondary data (e.g., administrative claims, medical records) to study prehabilitation, but data limitations pose a challenge to measurement. In claims, there is no dedicated procedural code designating that the service was delivered with the purpose or intent of preparing the patient for surgery. Several recently published studies attempting to study prehabilitation using administrative claims have defined prehabilitation using different criteria centered on preoperative timing and a defined set of procedural and diagnostic code criteria, but the risk for false-positive misclassification using this method is high, and the sensitivity and specificity of these varying criteria is unknown. An integrated delivery system and extensive linkable data infrastructure in the Veterans Affairs Health Care system offer an opportunity to leverage electronic health record data as a gold standard comparison to validate a claims-based algorithm for prehabilitation if methods can be devised to verify preoperative therapy session content (often recorded in free-text components) as prehabilitation in EHR data.

**Biography:** Jenni Seale Reiff is an occupational therapist and health services researcher committed to building an evidence base for policies and practices that leverage physical rehabilitation services as preventive interventions to protect health and wellbeing in aging. After practicing occupational therapy in a range of settings across the geriatric continuum of care, she completed a PhD in Health Services Research and Policy at Johns Hopkins University. She is now an Advanced Fellow in Geriatrics at the Atlanta VA and an Assistant Professor in the Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology at the Emory University School of Medicine, studying and developing specific use cases for prehabilitation implementation with older Veterans undergoing elective surgery within the VA, under the mentorship of Drs. Camille Vaughan, Madeleine Hackney, and Katharina Echt.