Chia-Cheng Lin, PhD, PT, MSPT

Chia-Cheng Lin, PhD, PT, MSPT, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy. He completed his PhD in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Pittsburgh and joined the faculty at ECU in 2014. His clinical background is mostly with people with neurological disorders in hospital and outpatient settings. Dr. Lin’s research interests include balance control and fall prevention in elderly, people with vestibular disorders, and individuals with peripheral neuropathy. Dr. Lin’s recent study is to identify of key somatosensory inputs and critical cut-points for functional decline and fall risk in the geriatric population and people with peripheral neuropathy. He collaborates with Dr. Stacey Meardon (Department of Physical Therapy), Dr. Sunghan Kim (Department of Engineering), and Dr. Kevin O’Brien (Department of Biostatistics) in this study. He also practices at the ECU physical therapy clinic at the Family Medicine Center.

What do you like best about working at ECU?

The supportive environment for research at ECU, a new gym just near our building, and the most important - good colleagues.

What do you find most exciting about your research and its potential?

I am interested in balance control in people with vestibular disorders, individuals with peripheral neuropathy, and in aging adults. I use two different approaches to studying this topic. Studying the brain activities using functional Near-Infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) allows me to investigate the top-down control of balance and the effect of certain disorders on balance control. Studying the somatosensory system of the foot and the vestibular system help me understand the bottom-up mechanism of balance control. It is my hope that we can enhance the recovery of one’s balance ability and prevent falls in people with balance issues based on our research results.

What excites you about teaching?

Teaching geriatric physical therapy is like teaching a life lesson for my students. I try to teach my students to treat the patient as a whole person, not just the diagnosis. When I see the changes in my students’ attitudes and the way they treat older individuals during the course of physical therapy, that is the movement exciting me about teaching.

What do you hope students take away from their experiences from working with you on your research?
I hope to provide opportunities for our physical therapy students to understand the processes of conducting a research study and to apply the research experiences in their future career. In the class, research studies are used to support the physical therapy practice. However, the students may not know how the study was conducted to solve the clinical question. When students work with me, I always want them to know the purpose of each measurement in the study so they can apply the knowledge in their future career when they review a research study or design a study by themselves.

**What is your favorite teaching or research moment?**

There is always something there to learn from my research subjects. I enjoy the conversations with my research participants. They tell me about themselves, their life experiences, and sometimes their opinions about the research study. I have had research participants who told me the history of Greenville and who gave me suggestions to improve my research.