**BACKGROUND**
- Service needs of aging populations are increasing dramatically.
- World wide currently almost 500 million people are over 65 and this number is expected to increase to over 1 billion by 2030 (NIA 2007).
- Utah has the 6th fastest growth rate of people over 65 (Utah Department of Human Services).
- US Department of Labor predicts rapid job growth demands among gerontology social work (US Department of Labor 2007).

**OBJECTIVE**
- To determine practicing master’s level social worker's interest in working with an aging population.
- To see how interest in working with elderly compares with other traditional social work populations.
- To determine how clinical and educational exposure affects practice interests.

**METHODS**
- Practice preference surveys were mailed to 100 social work graduate schools around the US for distribution to students.
- The survey asked for a ranking of interest in working with and clinical and classroom exposure to selective population using a 1-5 Likert-scale (1=low 5=high).
- Participants were also asked to list 3 most and 3 least desired populations.
- Amount of classroom and clinical exposure was compared to interest to determine correlation.
- Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to compare survey responses.

**RESULTS**
- 1050 surveys were returned and analyzed.
- Of the 32 populations queried, 3 of the 4 least desired populations were related to aging.
- The desire to work with a population was significantly correlated with classroom exposure (rho = 0.714, z=3.97) and particularly clinical experience with the population (rho = 0.769, z=4.28).
- The amount of classroom work and clinical exposure to a population also were very highly correlated (rho = 0.926, z=5.156).

**CONCLUSIONS**
- Based on the 1988 data there is a critical lack of interest in working with aging among social workers.
- Clinical and classroom exposure have a significant impact on desire to work with clinical populations.
- Institutions and agencies seeking to increase students desire to work with the elderly should increase clinical and classroom training opportunities.