OBJECTIVES: The specific aim of this randomized clinical trial is to evaluate the effectiveness of a 3-week reminiscence intervention, applied during bathing persons with AD, in decreasing resistiveness to care (RTC), relieving patient discomfort, and improving spouse caregiver appraisals of burden, self-efficacy with bathing, and satisfaction.

METHODS: Reminiscence provides a personalized intervention that draws on preserved individuality and retained long-terms memories, is simple to implement by a solitary lay caregiver, and is adaptable to the home environment. Best-loved memories, identified through interview with spouse caregivers, are used to engage the patient immediately prior to and during the bath. Home visits and telephone calls provide coaching and practice for caregivers in implementation. The sample includes 100 patient/spouse caregiver couples, randomized into one of two groups: reminiscence with coaching (R-C) or home based support (H-S) control. Using a repeated measure design, observations will be made at baseline, post-intervention (5 weeks), and follow-up (8 weeks). All outcome measures will be standardized, psychometrically sound, and appropriate for sequential administration. Patient outcomes are resistiveness to care and discomfort, measured by observation; caregiver outcomes are burden, self-efficacy, and satisfaction, measured with interviewer administered questionnaires. We hypothesize that for the R-C intervention group, patients will experience less RTC and less discomfort, and caregivers will experience less burden, more self-efficacy, and more satisfaction than control group counterparts.

FINDINGS: Since the last report, 3 additional participant dyads (patient and his/her caregiver) have enrolled for a total of 5 VA participants. Since this includes persons with Alzheimer’s Disease and their caregivers, the 5 identified patients would be considered for vulnerable population. The project is ongoing.