In the past twenty years, the number of American adults with visual impairments has increased, and is expected to double to eight million people by the year 2050 ("All Vision Impairment," National Eye Institute, 2013; The Eye Prevalence Research Group, 2004). Therapies to treat retinal diseases causing visual impairment, such as diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration (Massof, 2002; Mogk, 2011), have also evolved in the past two decades (Gupta et al., 2013; Hooper & Guymers, 2003), but little research has examined the recent population and difficulties with performing daily activities. Different types of professionals, including ophthalmologists, optometrists, occupational therapists, orientation and mobility specialists, vision rehabilitation therapists, and low vision therapists, work in assisting adults with visual impairments in remaining independent with daily tasks, and an understanding of population characteristics is critical
to providing successful treatment (Court, McLean, Guthrie, Mercer, & Smith, 2014; Johnson & Romanello, 2005; Salive, 2013). The studies in this three-paper dissertation examine difficulties with daily tasks, factors contributing to these difficulties, and any similarities and differences over time in adults with visual impairments.

This research indicates that adults with even mild visual impairment report difficulty with their daily tasks. The first and second studies examined similarities and differences over time in two different populations of adults with visual impairments. The first study compared data from 1997-2003 versus 2007-2012 from one Midwest hospital-based vision rehabilitation center, and the second study compared National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) participants from the years 1999-2000 versus 2007-2008. Both studies revealed a greater percentage of subjects with less severe vision impairment in the later time periods; however, overall, approximately 30% of people with less severe vision impairment reported difficulty with daily tasks, such as reading and driving. Results from the third study indicated as multimorbidity increased, the number of adults with visual impairment who reported difficulty increased, and this was accentuated with more severe visual impairment. These studies provide a better understanding of the similarities and differences over time in visual function, and in the associations between visual impairment, multimorbidity status and self-reported performance in daily activities in adults with visual impairment. Vision rehabilitation professionals need to understand the population in order to manage the treatment of adults with mild to severe visual impairments, but also in 54% of the cases complicated by multimorbidity.