



at the UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

The Newsletter

U of R Assistant Professor Natasha Gallant Leads Team Evaluating an Intervention Supporting the Reintegration of Designated Caregivers during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate effect on older adults living in long-term care (LTC) homes in Canada. For instance, older adults are experiencing higher mortality rates, risks of severe complications, and mental health consequences associated with isolation and loneliness. To respond to this crisis, the Government of Canada and its partners invested \$1.8 million to strengthen Canada's pandemic response in LTC homes. The funding was awarded to 14 implementation science teams from across Canada. Implementation scientists usually assess what about an intervention or a policy works, for whom it works, and under what conditions or circumstances it succeeds or fails.

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Newsletter Editor:

Janine Beahm, MA
CAH Administrator
janine.beahm@uregina.ca

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In this case, the implementation science teams were funded to evaluate the outcomes and impacts of interventions and policy options designed to keep residents, their families, caregivers, and staff safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. By testing interventions or policies in real-world settings, the teams expect their findings to help strengthen current pandemic responses as well as mitigate risks associated with possible future outbreaks. This initiative, known as the LTC Implementation Science Team initiative, is led by the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement and the Canadian Patient Safety Institute, and has received funding support from Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation, the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, and the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation, powered by Baycrest and the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research.

The CAH would like to congratulate CAH affiliate and new faculty member within the University of Regina's Department of Psychology, Natasha Gallant, for leading one of these implementation science teams as a principal investigator. Gallant was a previous graduate student in the University of Regina's Clinical Psychology Program. She recently completed her Pre-Doctoral Internship in Clinical Psychology at The Ottawa Hospital. Following this 1-year internship, she returned to the University of Regina as a faculty member. Her work is focused on improving the lived experiences of aging populations, including residents living in LTC, through impactful research and policy work.

Gallant's team is partnering with LTC homes in Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick to support them in reintegrating designated caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Designated caregivers include family members, close friends, or others who provide essential care such as support in decision making, care coordination, and continuity of care. Thus, the goal of this intervention is to reintegrate designated caregivers into LTC homes in a safe manner so that they can continue to provide this essential care for the residents in their care. Components of the intervention include identifying designated caregivers and a point-person for designated caregivers, development of a consistent screening process and infection prevention and control protocols for designated caregivers, education to support the re-entry of designated caregivers, and education for LTC staff on the essential role of designated caregivers

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Natasha Gallant, Assistant Professor, University of Regina

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The team is evaluating whether the intervention will improve the quality of life of residents, designated caregivers, and staff as well as decreasing feelings of loneliness and increasing perceived social support among residents. They are also examining if the interventions improve staff experiences of stress and burnout. Throughout the implementation process, they will gather feedback from residents, caregivers, and staff to improve the intervention on an ongoing basis. If shown to be successful, Gallant and her team will continue to support these LTC homes in implementing this intervention and will work to scale-up the intervention by making it available to other homes in Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, and other jurisdictions across Canada. Congratulations to Gallant and her team!

***Congratulations to U
of R Assistant
Professor,
Natasha Gallant, and
Team for receiving
funding to support
and evaluate an
intervention program
for reintegrating
designated
caregivers during
COVID-19!***

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR 2020/2021 INNOVATION IN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY AWARD

The Centre on Aging and Health Award for Innovation in Health Care Delivery recognizes Regina-based individuals, groups, or organizations, offering health care to older adults. Award recipients must have introduced an innovative approach to service provision or must have conducted field research to evaluate services or programs for older persons.

If you know of someone that would be deserving of this award, nominations (of no more than 8 pages) are to be submitted at any time up until October 15, 2021 for the 2021-2022 Award.

For more information on eligibility, adjudication, or about how to apply, please visit <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/about-cah/innovation-in-health-care-delivery-award> or contact Janine Beahm, CAH Administrator, at janine.beahm@uregina.ca

The CAH Launches Virtual Series

Visit the Centre on Aging and Health, University of Regina YouTube channel to watch previous lectures and other videos!

Every year the Centre on Aging and Health (CAH) looks forward to hosting engaging events for the community. However, due to the public health recommendations related to COVID-19, we are unable to gather in person this year. In lieu of these events, we have launched a virtual series on our CAH YouTube channel featuring videos of previous lectures and events. For instance, we are sharing our 2018 Annual Distinguished Lecture delivered by Dr. Danielle Martin, Women's College Hospital and University of Toronto. Dr. Martin is known for her presentation before a US Senate Subcommittee on Canada's Health Care System, which went viral on YouTube. For the CAH distinguished lecture, she presented a talk called "Better Now: How we Can Improve Healthcare for Seniors." Among other videos, you will also find a video of highlights from our 2019 Brain Awareness Week event where we brought in 18 researchers from the AGE-WELL Network of Excellence from across Canada to demonstrate research and technologies showing how technologies can be used to improve the lives of older adults.

Other videos you may be interested in include a lecture by Maureen Maureen Schmitter-Edgcombe, Ph.D., Washington State University called "Maximizing Brain Health and Independence in Old Age" as well as a one by Mark Chignell, Ph.D., University of Toronto called "Creating a Sense of Purpose with Meaningful Tasks". Given that we were not able to announce the award winner of our Innovation in Health Care Award (announced in our previous newsletter) in person, we have also released a virtual award announcement on our channel. By sharing these videos, we are seeking to increase our online presence by providing engaging content for members of the public, researchers, health professionals and policy makers.

To access our YouTube channel, you can search "Centre on Aging and Health, University of Regina" on YouTube, access the link on our website's "links" page, or click on the link below:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq9L0GxcdVIQO85c_yFMLrQ



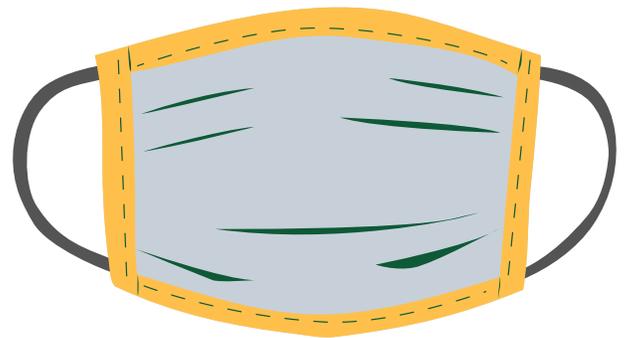
Dr. Danielle Martin at the
2018 CAH Annual Distinguished Lecture

Does Wearing a Face Mask Affect Ability to Perform Exercise?

A Webinar with Phil Chilibeck, Ph.D.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many restrictions began being put in place for public activities including indoor fitness classes. This includes mandates to use face masks during exercise. Some have expressed concern about use of masks during exercise. To provide the public with evidence-based information on this issue, the CAH partnered with the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism for a lunch-and-learn webinar with Dr. Phil Chilibeck, a prominent professor in the College of Kinesiology, University of Saskatchewan. His research area involves the effects of exercise and nutrition in both younger and older adults with a focus on athletic performance and prevention of diseases such as osteoporosis and diabetes.

Based on his own research and available literature, Dr. Chilibeck argued that wearing face masks during exercise does not appear to affect oxygen levels in the blood or substantially affect exercise performance. Dr. Chilibeck also noted that he, himself, has been cycling or cross-country skiing daily during the COVID-19 pandemic while wearing a face mask. A recording of the lecture can be accessed as part of our virtual series on YouTube.



Click here to visit the CAH YouTube channel.

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and click on **“Become a Member.”**

The Antibiotic Apocalypse:

A Webinar with Jason Vanstone, Ph.D.

Antibiotics are a precious resource, and according to Dr. Jason Vanstone, we need to use them wisely to avoid an “Antibiotic Apocalypse.” The CAH co-hosted a webinar in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism on February 4th, 2021 with Dr. Jason Vanstone, Ph.D. (Cellular and Molecular Medicine), a research scientist for the Saskatchewan Health Authority’s Antimicrobial Stewardship Program. Dr. Vanstone discussed how antibiotics have decreased the number of deaths due to bacteria over the years. However, he suggested that bacterial infections that are resistant to antibiotic treatment are a growing burden on our health system. The problem is, according to Dr. Vanstone, that the more antibiotics we use, the more antibiotic resistance we observe. He warned of the potential for an “Antibiotic Apocalypse” where deaths could increase due to increases in bacterial infections that are resistant to antibiotics. The presentation introduced the concept of antibiotic stewardship. In other words, he argued that if we use antibiotics wisely, we can prevent ourselves from reaching a point where antibiotics are no longer effective in treating disease.

According to Dr. Vanstone, some things we can do to defend ourselves against the apocalypse and practice antibiotic stewardship include:

- 1. Not requesting antibiotics when we are diagnosed with an illness. Instead, he recommends talking to the physician about whether antibiotics are necessary.***
- 2. Practicing proper hand washing to reduce the spread of bacteria.***
- 3. Not sharing or using old antibiotics and returning unused ones to the pharmacy.***
- 4. Getting vaccinated against the flu or other viruses that could be confused with a bacterial infections.***

Dr. Vanstone warned the audience that we need to do these important things so that we “don’t let the sun set on the antibiotic era.”



Jason Vanstone, Ph.D., Saskatchewan Health Authority

CAH Director Awarded Pain Awareness Award for See Pain More Clearly Campaign:

Kudos to the Entire Team

The underassessment and undermanagement of pain in people with dementia has been the primary focus of the Centre on Aging and Health's director's, Thomas Hadjistarvopoulos', Ph.D., FCAHS, academic career. The work he has conducted with trainees and other collaborators has spanned from developing and validating a checklist for assessing pain in patients with dementia (i.e., Pain Assessment Checklists for Seniors with Limited Ability to Communicate) to working on an automated vision system used to detect pain in patients based on facial cues. Over the last few years, he has emphasized the translation of research knowledge in ways that it can be used by practitioners, patients and families. His innovative knowledge mobilization work has captured the attention of a Canadian Pain Society (CPS) awards committee that recognized Hadjistarvopoulos with its 2021 Pain Awareness Award. Fittingly, this award is given to a member of the

CPS who raises awareness about the problem of undermanaged pain in Canada to a national audience and who raises awareness about solutions to this problem. The CPS is a "society of scientists, health professionals, educators and pain advocates who have a vested interest in pain research and management" (www.canadianpainsociety.ca).

Since 2019, Hadjistarvopoulos has been working with a team on a knowledge mobilization campaign called #SeePainMoreClearly (SPMC). Other members of the team include graduate student Louise Castillo, geriatric psychiatrist Lilian Thorpe, psychologists Christine Chambers and Jaime Williams, health care administrator Kelly Chessie, education professor Alec Couros and caregiver partners Mary Brachaniec, Andre LeRuyet and Charmayne LeRuyet. The campaign's goal is to raise awareness about the underassessment and under treatment of pain in people living with dementia and to provide evidence-based resources to facilitate potential solutions. This work has been supported by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient Oriented Research, the Canadian Pain Network, the AGE WELL Network of Centres of Excellence, the Canadian Association on Gerontology and the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan.

The initial pilot SPMC campaign launched on Twitter on October 1, 2019 and within five months the campaign's posts

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gathered over 5.7 million impressions and the #SeePainMoreClearly hashtag was used in 31 countries. The initial project was undertaken by a small team consisting of Hadjistavropoulos and his student, Louise Castillo. The team began by creating and sharing a short video on YouTube highlighting the importance of appropriate pain assessment and management. This 2-minute video has now been viewed by over 50,000 people (click here to watch).

The success of the initial launch allowed Hadjistavropoulos to secure more funding for the project and expand its reach by engaging a digital media partner. A second phase of the campaign was launched on October 1, 2020 and expanded into a variety of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. The SPMC team continues to distribute information and resources on pain in dementia on their social media sites. The team also maintains a website (www.seepainmoreclearly.org) which has had over 23.6 thousand visitors. A #SeePainMoreClearly blog is a popular feature on the website with the top blog post receiving over 2000 page views to date. The blog features highly respected researchers, scientists, medical professionals, family members and caregivers of dementia patients, and dementia sufferers who share posts and articles. For instance, one article was written in collaboration with award winning Canadian author, Louise Penny.

Castillo, now a graduate student in the clinical psychology program at the University of Regina, has been part of the initiative from the start and continues to stress the importance of providing evidence-based information to the public. She notes that the award is recognition that what the team is doing is successful. In her words,

“The award reflects the success of the initiative to mobilize knowledge about pain in dementia and ensure that important research information is getting to the hands of the people who will benefit most from it - caregivers, family members, health professionals, and people living with dementia from across and beyond Canada.”

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#SeePainMoreClearly

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Care partner and SPMC team member, Mary Brachaniec, also shares the importance of this work and the award for recognizing this work in the following letter:

“As a former dementia caregiver and a Care Partner on the #SeePainMoreClearly team, I am very thankful for the leadership and dedication demonstrated by Thomas in raising awareness of under-managed pain among vulnerable seniors with dementia, and in sharing evidence-based solutions to address this problem.

During our parents’ dementia journeys, we feared that Mom or Dad would experience pain that they could not tell us about, as was the case when our Mother’s health declined and her pain was not regularly assessed or managed. Despite our efforts to improve this situation, the systemic barriers to consistent and effective pain assessment and management protocols prevented our mother from receiving the care she needed.

This is why we strongly support the research that Thomas has done in developing and validating pain assessment checklists that caregivers and health professionals can use, and in mobilizing this evidence to key stakeholders so that these approaches are widely implemented in Canada and beyond.

These protocols would bring peace of mind to families and caregivers working to prevent unnecessary suffering for vulnerable seniors with dementia, particularly those who experience communication difficulties.

With these considerations in mind, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Thomas and the entire #SeePainMoreClearly team for its work in improving the quality of life for countless people and families struggling with dementia. We can’t think of anyone more deserving of this recognition by the Canadian Pain Society.”

If you want to find out more about the campaign and contribute to the project, you can visit the website by clicking here: **<https://www.seepainmoreclearly.org>**.

If you want to get involved with this research, you can also participate in the study by clicking here: **<https://www.seepainmoreclearly.org/participate-in-our-study>**

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Admission Requirements:

4-year undergraduate degree in areas such as, nursing, kinesiology, psychology, social work, health studies, sociology, biology, or a health professional degree .

Applications Due: March 31st, 2021

(for Fall 2021 Admissions)

For More Information:

Dr. Abigail Wickson-Griffiths
Program Coordinator
306-337-2132
Abigial.Wickson-Griffiths@uregina.ca

Janine Beahm
CAH Administrator
306-337-8477
cah@uregina.ca

Apply now for the 2021/2022 CAH Small Grants Research Award!

Amount Available: \$1,500 Application Deadline:
December 15, 2021

This award is intended to fund pilot projects or other work aimed to lead to the preparation of a major national application in the area of health and aging.

To apply, or for more information: <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/>
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