



at the UNIVERSITY OF REGINA  
The Newsletter

## 2022-2023 Distinguished Lecture: Can we Prevent Some Dementias Now?

The Centre on Aging and Health was delighted to resume in-person events this spring! Over 120 people attended our 17th annual 2022/23 Distinguished Lecture on April 27, 2023 with visiting speaker Dr. Manuel Montero-Odasso (MD, PHD, FRCPC, AGSF, FGSA), of Western University, whose lecture, “Can We Prevent Some Dementias Now? The role of healthy aging, frailty, and lifestyle interventions”, captivated the audience.

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2022-2023 Distinguished Lecture

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The lecture was originally scheduled on March 26, 2020 but was cancelled due to public health measures designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As such, we were particularly appreciative of the opportunity of a second-chance to host Dr. Montero-Odasso at our first Distinguished Lecture since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Montero-Odasso is a Professor of Medicine, Epidemiology and Biostatistics and Director of the 'Gait and Brain Lab' at Parkwood Institute in London, Ontario. He is also a geriatrician and clinician-scientist at the Lawson Health Research Institute, team leader at the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA), and team co-leader at the Ontario Neurodegenerative Research Initiative (ONDRI). He leads the Gait and Brain Health Program, with the goal of understanding mechanisms and potential treatments of mobility and cognitive decline in older individuals.

Dr. Montero-Odasso presented his team's compelling research showing that up to 30% of dementias can be prevented or delayed through lifestyle interventions. Effective prevention of even a small fraction of dementias will result in billions of dollars of cost savings in the Canadian health care system. His lecture is now available on the CAH YouTube channel and can be

viewed by following this link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZgb7p1rP9s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZgb7p1rP9s).

Following his lecture, Dr. Montero-Odasso took questions from the very engaged audience, further increasing the knowledge of all those in attendance. Earlier in the day, Dr. Montero-Odasso also spoke with a group of older adults from Regina and answered their questions about possible preventative strategies for some dementia.

The CAH thanks Dr. Montero-Odasso for delivering his compelling Distinguished Lecture.



Dr. Manuel Montero-Odasso presenting his research

# Riveting Film Screening of 'The Father' for Regina Brain Awareness Week

The Centre on Aging and Health was thrilled to host our first public event for 2022/23 on March 14, 2023 during the 20th anniversary of Brain Awareness Week events in Regina, under the umbrella of the Dana Foundation. Over 80 people attended our free film screening of the Academy Award-winning film, 'The Father', starring Anthony Hopkins and Olivia Colman. The film is a compelling and suspenseful psychological drama, and is unique as it is told from the perspective of the main character, who is experiencing increasingly debilitating dementia. As the man suffers from severe dementia, he struggles to make sense of his changing circumstances, to trust his daughter and others entrusted with his care, and to maintain his sense of self and grip on reality.

The film screening was followed by a thought-provoking discussion with Dr. William Smythe, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, who shared his perspective on the main character's subjective

experience, our empathy with his plight, and the importance of human connection. Members of the audience shared their perspectives on the film, their experiences of supporting relatives with dementia, and spoke about the journey through dementia experienced by their loved ones. The film's evocative portrayal of the main character's profound sense of loss and confusion will not soon be forgotten by those who attended the screening and discussion, and leaves a lasting impression of the incredibly important purpose of the research that is being done to alleviate and reduce the suffering and loss caused by severe dementia.

For more information about the Dana Foundation and Brain Awareness Week, visit [www.dana.org](http://www.dana.org).



Audience discussion led by Dr. William Smythe following the film screening

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Applying is quick and easy.

Apply on our website: <https://research.uregina.ca/cah>  
and click on **“Become a Member.”**

## New Leadership in Indigenous Cluster

The Centre on Aging and Health encourages and facilitates the formation of research clusters representing specific strengths at the University of Regina. Soon after the founding of the Centre on Aging and Health, we created the cluster, *'Aboriginal Issues in Aging'*, led by Mary Hampton in collaboration with other researchers, including Indigenous elders. This research cluster became very successful, and was able to procure funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to investigate palliative issues in the Indigenous population.

Following the retirement of Dr. Hampton, we are delighted to announce new leadership and exciting new directions in the cluster, which has now been renamed, *'Indigenous Perspectives on Life and Holistic Health'* (IPLHH). Cluster leader, Dr. Angela McGinnis, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Regina and CAH member, will be supervising CAH trainee, doctoral candidate, and SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship (CGS-D) 2022-2023 Recipient, Noela Crowe-Salazar, in her research on Indigenous life cycle teachings within Cowessess First Nation. Dr. McGinnis' newest Master's student, Abhay Singh Sachal, will also be working under the IPLHH cluster to explore the role of connectedness to nature for positive mental health from an Indigenous perspective.

The purpose of the 'Indigenous Perspectives on Life and Holistic Health' research cluster will be to support research relating to the interdependence of Indigenous peoples' physical and mental health and the health of the natural world from the perspective of Indigenous Elders. Dr. McGinnis's community-based research uses innovative blends of quantitative, qualitative, and Indigenous methodologies to pursue research that strengthens the connection between humans and their more-than-human counterparts in ways that facilitates holistic wellness for Indigenous Elders, their families, and their communities.



Dr. Angela McGinnis, University of Regina

Dr. McGinnis was the recipient of the CAH Small Grants Research Award Competition (2022), which will be used for the development of a larger grant application to a national or provincial grant competition, with a focus on health and aging. Dr. McGinnis's current project, "Indigenous Roots of Wellness: Restoring the Human-Land Relationship

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with the Seven Sisters Reconciliation Garden”, involves the creation of a Seven Sisters Reconciliation Garden that is rooted in traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and Indigenous regenerative horticultural practices. Guided by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, the reconciliation garden will serve as a nature-based therapeutic site to help restore the traditional human-land relationship and explore its mental health and holistic wellness benefits for Indigenous peoples. Dr. McGinnis believes that traditional relationships with plants and animals provide us with metaphors and models for healing work, where Indigenous Elders play a key role in understanding the importance of strong relationships with the more-than-human world. “Indigenous Elders are vital to understanding the healing capacity of more-than-human beings through storytelling, ceremony, and ways of knowing and being in close relation to the land. By building up the health of the land and all its plant and animal inhabitants, we ensure a healthy and sustainable life for humans and for future generations to come.”

In addition to her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Western University, Dr. McGinnis is pursuing registration as a horticultural therapist and equine psychotherapist with plans to continue to integrate her clinical work into the IPLHH cluster research and trainee mentorship. Her graduate course at the University of Regina, *Multiple Ways of*

***“Indigenous Elders are vital to understanding the healing capacity of more-than-human beings through storytelling, ceremony, and ways of knowing and being in close relation to the land. By building up the health of the land and all its plant and animal inhabitants, we ensure a healthy and sustainable life for humans and for future generations to come.”***

*Healing,* introduces early career counsellors and psychotherapists to ways that the socially constituted separation between human and more-than-human beings can be disrupted in order to move towards an ecological consciousness that identifies plants, animals and land as key partners in the healing process. It aims to reshape the fields of psychology, counselling, and environmental education by exploring the ways that human health cannot stand apart from an intimate connection with the natural world.

# Age-Friendly Regina Active in Community

'Age-Friendly' is a worldwide movement that was established by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is promoted by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Age-Friendly Regina is comprised of volunteer community members, community organizations, City of Regina, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, and the University of Regina's Centre on Aging and Health. Together their goal is to make Regina a more age-friendly city where people of all ages are valued, included and supported, enjoy healthy, active lifestyles and age positively.

Age-Friendly Committees involve older adults to provide an Age-Friendly 'lens', which is then applied to all ages and all aspects of the community where the policies, services and structures related to the physical world and social environment are designed to help people of all ages "age actively." The Centre on Aging and Health's involvement in Age-Friendly Regina, founded in 2018, continues, with much news to report.

## Provincial Recognition

On November 22, 2022, the provincial government, represented by The Hon. Everett Hindley, Minister of Seniors, recognized Regina as an Age-Friendly Community at the Saskatchewan Legislative Building. In order to receive this honor the Age-Friendly Committee

had completed four Age-Friendly milestones: establishing an Age-Friendly Committee, achieving local government support, assessing the community, and implementing an action plan. André Nogue, former Chair of Age-Friendly Regina, accepted the Award on behalf of the Age-Friendly Regina Committee. Becoming Age-Friendly is a journey, and there is still much work to be done.



Members of Age-Friendly Regina with Hon. Everett Hindley and Hon. Gene Makowsky

## New Age-Friendly Survey

Age-Friendly Regina has also released a new survey to inform its work in the community in order to gain feedback on the strengths and gaps of age friendliness in Regina. The answers to the survey will be summarized and shared with the community, with all individual responses kept confidential. The survey takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and includes sections on transportation, housing, safety, social respect and inclusion, community and work force participation, social participation and recreation, information and advocacy, and health and community services.

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For more information on the survey, email [agefriendlyregina@gmail.com](mailto:agefriendlyregina@gmail.com). To take part in this survey, please visit <https://agefriendlysk.ca/af-regina-community-page> and click "Survey".

## 'Aging Well in Regina' Guide

### Launch and CBC Blue Sky

On June 8, Age-Friendly Regina launched a four-part directory, called 'A Guide to Aging Well in Regina' at the Lifelong Learning Centre at the University of Regina's Centre for Continuing Education. Members of the Age-Friendly Regina Committee gave a brief history of the Age-Friendly movement, discussed the goals and priorities of AF Regina, and Lindsay Bzdel of the Saskatchewan Health Authority, who worked tirelessly on the

Guides, provided a comprehensive introduction to their content and use. The Guide includes sections on: Housing Supports and Options; Transportation Options; Mental Health and Well-being; and Crime Prevention and Safety.

To access free copies of the Guides, which are printable or can be viewed digitally, please visit <https://agefriendlysk.ca/af-regina-community-page>.

CBC's Blue Sky also hosted members of Age-Friendly Regina, in recognition of the Guides' launch and AF Sask's work in communities throughout Saskatchewan. To listen to the CBC episode, visit: [www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-189-blue-sky](http://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-189-blue-sky).

## NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR 2023/2024 CAH AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Centre on Aging and Health 'Award for Innovation in Health and Wellness' recognizes Regina-based individuals, groups, or organizations offering health or wellness services to older adults. Services may be related to healthcare, mental health, exercise, nutrition, social participation and inclusion, and/or community support. Award recipients must have introduced an innovative approach to service provision or who have conducted field research to evaluate services or programs for older persons.

Winners will be presented with an Award certificate at a CAH public event, will be offered formal affiliation with the CAH, and will be featured in the CAH Newsletter and CAH website. If you know of a person or organization that would be deserving of this award, nominations may be submitted at any time up until October 15, 2023 for the 2023-2024 Award.

For more information on eligibility, adjudication, or about how to apply, please visit <https://research.uregina.ca/cah/about-cah/innovation-in-health-wellness-award> or contact Kathryn Smart, CAH Administrator, at [Kathryn.Smart@uregina.ca](mailto:Kathryn.Smart@uregina.ca)

# Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR President) Visits CAH Member Laboratories

'CAH Members Dr. Jennifer Gordon (Leader of the Aging and Women's Health CAH Cluster) and Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos (CAH Director and Leader of the Pain in Old Age Cluster) along with their graduate students welcomed CIHR President Dr. Michael Strong who toured their labs during a brief visit to the U of R in early May.



CIHR President, Dr. Michael Strong, with Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos and his graduate students in the Health Psychology Lab



CIHR President meets with CAH Members and Trainees

While on campus, Dr. Strong also visited a few other labs and gave an excellent presentation as part of a U of R organized symposium on "What are Universities for?".

## POTENTIAL RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Members of the public who are over 65-years of age and are interested in participating in research can sign up by going to <https://research.uregina.ca/cah>, clicking on "Participate in Research," and filling out our simple web form.

The CAH hosts a directory of hundreds of potential research participants for University of Regina Research Ethics Board approved studies conducted by members, associates and trainees of the Centre on Aging and Health.

# APPLY FOR THE M.A./M.SC. AGING STUDIES PROGRAM

**“Seniors make up the fastest growing age group...  
By 2051, about one in four Canadians is expected to  
be 65 or over.”**

**– *Statistics Canada***

- Exciting inter-disciplinary, research-oriented graduate degree program.
- Provides research training and specialized gerontology knowledge to health professionals and students.
- Emphasizes both the physiological and psychosocial aspects of aging.
- The collaboration of the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies and the Faculty of Social Work and coordinated by the University of Regina’s Centre on Aging and Health.

## **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, 2024**  
**(for Fall 2024 Admissions)**

## **For More Information:**

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# Apply now for the 2023/2024 CAH Small Grants Research Award!

Amount Available: \$1,500 Application Deadline:  
December 15, 2023

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:  
<https://research.uregina.ca/cah/about-cah/cah-grants-programs/>  
or [cah@uregina.ca](mailto:cah@uregina.ca) or 306.337.8477

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