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CAH NEWSLETTER

The CAH newsletter is currently accepting submissions. Your comments, suggestions, announcements, and CAH-related news items are most welcome.

Please email submissions to:

Scott J. Wilson
CAH Administrator/
Newsletter Editor
scott.j.wilson@uregina.ca

CAH AND PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING CLINIC WIN JOINT AWARD TO FUND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM FOCUSING ON AGING

The University of Regina Centre on Aging and Health (CAH) and the Psychology Training Clinic at the University of Regina won a Canadian Psychological Association Foundation 2009 Innovative Access to Psychological Services Award.

Winning this award has allowed the CAH and the training clinic to start a graduate student practicum at the University of Regina where doctoral clinical psychology students gain valuable experience helping older adults cope with chronic pain while supervised by a Registered Doctoral Psychologist.

The *Chronic Pain Program at the Psychology Training Clinic* has been funded for twelve months and is now underway. It helps persons who are age sixty-five and older living with chronic pain manage their pain through cognitive behavioural techniques.

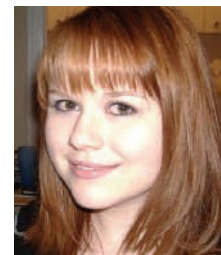
Through 8-12 weekly interactive sessions, the psychosocial pain management program identifies areas of life affected by pain, develops strategies to manage pain, and sees the practitioners work with clients to try new pain management and prevention strategies. The potential benefits from the program include but are not limited to increased healthy aging, decreased stress of living with pain, and improved quality of life.

The first graduate students to take part in the practicum are doctoral clinical psychology students Sarah Chan and Heather Eritz, who have been running the Chronic Pain Program under the supervision of Dr. Tania Safnuk.

The program is considering referrals (including self-referrals) for the fall. Interested persons (over 65 years of age with a chronic pain problem) can contact 306.337.2537. Health professionals who wish to refer clients can use the same number.



Ms. Sarah Chan



Ms. Heather Eritz

CAH DIRECTOR NAMED RESEARCH CHAIR IN AGING AND HEALTH

(Based on the University of Regina Announcement)

On March 10, 2010 Dr. David Gauthier, University of Regina Vice-President (Research), announced that Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos, CAH Director, has been appointed as Research Chair in Aging and Health at the University of Regina. Supported by an anonymous external donation to the University, the Research Chair in Aging and Health dedicates the majority of his or her time to gerontological research.

The Research Chair also supports the mandate of the Centre on Aging and Health which focuses on the enhancement of graduate training, health research, and community outreach.

Dr. Hadjistavropoulos' research, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, focuses on pain assessment and management among seniors with a special emphasis on seniors who have severe limitations in ability to communicate because of dementia.

He has been honoured with a prestigious CIHR Investigator Award, the Year 2000 Canadian Pain Society Early Career Award for Excellence in Pain Research, the Canadian Association on Gerontology Distinguished Member Award, the

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation Career Achievement Award, the University of Regina Research Excellence Award, a Saskatchewan Health Care Excellence Award, a Saskatchewan Centennial Medal and other distinctions.

He has also been elected Fellow of the Canadian Psychological Association as well as of the American Psychological Association in recognition of his distinguished contributions to the science and profession of psychology. In the Fall of 2009, he was inducted as Fellow in the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences which represents one of the highest honours available to Canadian Health Scientists.

Dr. Hadjistavropoulos has served as Editor of Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne and Psychology Section Editor of the Canadian Journal on Aging. Presently, he serves as Associate Editor of BMC Geriatrics as well as on several other editorial boards. He has published well over 100 peer reviewed papers and book chapters as well as four books.

Moreover, Dr. Hadjistavropoulos served as the 2007-2008 President of the Canadian Psychological Association.

Dr. Hadjistavropoulos' work will help to advance gerontological research through the Centre on Aging and Health at the University of Regina.



Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos

CAH HOSTS 2010 DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

The Centre on Aging and Health is proud to announce that our 2009-2010 Distinguished Lecture was a success.

On March 25, 2010, Dr. Jane Fisher spoke at the University of Regina. Her talk, "Lessons from a Lifetime of Learning: Behavioural Health in Late Life," was well received and offered insight into behavioural health of older adults.

Dr. Fisher of the University of Nevada, Reno suggested we are able to learn much from observing the behaviours of persons who have lived a long life and have more experience coping, have a variety of behaviours available for problem solving, and are more skilled at making judgments about the relative importance of problems. She noted that evidence based behavioural health treatments typically attempt to increase the variability of behaviours available for coping, similar to what happens in healthy aging.

In fact, Fisher suggests that middle age is more likely a time where our behavioural health is at the greatest risk due to career, family, economic and other stressors. By late life most older adults have learned valuable lessons from a lifetime of coping. As a result the highest rates of contentment are found among older adults. She noted that the most significant threat to healthy behaviour in late life is due to cognitive disorders which result in the devastating loss of skills and behaviours learned over decades. In her view, care planning for older adults with dementia should emphasize the maintenance of behaviours. Unfortunately, due to the stigma surrounding dementia, adaptive behaviours in older adults with verbal impairments are often mistaken for symptoms of dementia.

Fisher believes the misinterpretation of affective and behaviour changes that occur when an older

adult with dementia is experiencing an adverse event leads to the undertreatment of pain, and other conditions such as infection, medication side effects, anxiety, and depression. As a result, reversible conditions often go untreated. Many of the interventions used to reduce or eliminate the misdiagnosed behavioural "symptoms" lead to excess disability and premature death.

Fisher noted that since there is currently no cure for dementing illnesses a main concern for persons with dementia is that their verbalizations and adaptive behaviours are often labeled as "psychotic," which leads to an increased exposure to psychotropic medications, which ultimately create new deficits. The adverse effects of psychotropics, such as sedation, premature loss of language and increased confusion may, in turn, be perceived as the progression of the dementing disease and go untreated.

Ultimately, Fisher believes we must promote behavioural health in persons with dementia by promoting quality of life, preventing excess disability by increasing proper diagnosis, *preventing* not eliminating challenging behaviours, promoting adaptive behaviour, and preventing institutionalization for as long as possible.

Fisher ended her talk with advice for caregivers, which she calls positive approaches to challenging behaviours where after ruling out an adverse event (such as pain, infection, distress) the caregiver should apply appropriate interventions.

Caregivers are encouraged to meet the social or environmental needs communicated by the behaviour through methods such reducing task demands or providing meaningful activities, thereby making the challenging behaviour unnecessary.



Dr. Jane Fisher

For information on past Distinguished Lectures, you can find our newsletter at <http://ourspace.uregina.ca/handle/10294/484>



REGINA BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK 2010: CAH HOSTS "AWAY FROM HER"

On Thursday, March 18, 2010 the CAH hosted a free public screening of Sarah Polley's critically-acclaimed and Oscar-nominated film, *Away from Her*. The CAH's contribution to Regina Brain Awareness Week 2010 was a resounding success.

Away from Her is a film about a couple married for fifty years who must face Alzheimer's disease when Fiona, played by Julie Christie, begins exhibiting symptoms.

In interviews, Polley has said she wanted to "explore how a long marriage survives without falling back on remembrances of a more romantic past, a gambit on which many stories rely." This launching point makes *Away from Her* sincere, confronting the disease while not showcasing a false, idealized past.

According to critics and health professionals, Polley's film is a fascinating portrayal of Alzheimer's disease, caregiving, and the strain Alzheimer's can place on any relationship.

Joanne Michael of the Alzheimer's Society of Saskatchewan was on hand to lead a brief discussion following the film and stressed the importance of Alzheimer's awareness especially when cases of the disease are set to increase dramatically in coming years.

Michael said that while the film is realistic for the most part, it is still a fictional work and artistic license means certain characters like health care professionals in the film may be exaggerated for dramatic effect. Ultimately, Michael suggested that art is an important means of promoting awareness.

In addition to the event hosted by CAH, other local groups in Regina planned activities promoting brain health. The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan hosted 'Heads Up for Healthier Brains', SGI hosted a 'Driving and Dementia' public forum and a display table, while the Seniors' Healthy Living Program, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region hosted a display table as well.

Brain Awareness Week is an international event founded and coordinated by the Dana Foundation whose objective is to form collaborations between schools, post-secondary institutions, hospitals, and other organizations.

As indicated by the Dana Foundation, through these collaborations, the foundation hopes to achieve three goals: 1) inform the community about the importance of brain research, 2) provide knowledge and information required to make health related decisions, and 3) to provide inspiration for future researchers and professionals.

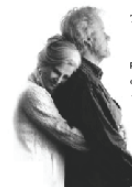


March 12-21, 2010

University of Regina
Centre on Aging and Health presents:
A film by Sarah Polley

"A beautifully done film made with delicacy and class virtu." - *MovieWeek*

AWAY FROM HER
A film by Sarah Polley



Thursday, March 18, 2010 at 6:30 PM
Research Innovation Centre (RIC) Room 119.
Free parking will be available in Lot 15 MC.
For more information: 306.337.8477
or cah.uregina.ca
free admission

Discussion led by Alzheimer's Society of Saskatchewan on Alzheimer's disease and caregiving to follow.
Regina Brain Awareness Week
March 15-21, 2010

**For more CAH
Lectures and Events
visit
[http://uregina.ca/
hadjistt/
centre_index.htm](http://uregina.ca/hadjistt/centre_index.htm)
or
For Info on Brain
Awareness Week
visit
[http://
www.dana.org/
brainweek/](http://www.dana.org/brainweek/)**

U OF R MASTER'S PROGRAM IN GERONTOLOGY UPDATE: NANA BONSU GRADUATES

The CAH congratulates Mr. Nana Bonsu on his graduation from the Master's Program in Gerontology at the University of Regina.

Bonsu completed his Honours degree in Gerontology at McMaster University before completing his MSc at the University of Regina.

Bonsu has a general interest in meaningful and successful aging. More specifically, he studies the impact of healthy lifestyle (physical activity and nutrition) and socio-cultural factors on the aging process, particularly diabetes. Furthermore, he examines how these socio-cultural factors affect government policy.

His thesis, supervised by Dr. Shanthi Johnson, examines whether the consumption of inulin, a type of soluble fibre, would be able to improve cholesterol and glucose levels in individuals diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Bonsu said he found the program rewarding and that "it is an honour to graduate from such an interesting program." He goes on to explain the importance of programs like this. "Gerontological issues cover a wide range of topics and with the rapid aging of Canada's population, older adults will make up a significant proportion of the population. It is important to develop effective policies and continue with cutting edge research, which will help to ease the transition as the population ages."

The MA/MSc Gerontology program, the first of its kind on the prairies, is coordinated by the

CAH and is an inter-disciplinary research-oriented graduate degree program. Students with health professional degrees (e.g., nursing, physical therapy), or undergraduate degrees in disciplines such as kinesiology, psychology, social work, health studies, gerontology, sociology, and biology are eligible.

Moreover, the program is a collaboration of the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies and the Faculty of Social Work and aims to provide research training and specialized gerontology knowledge to health professionals and students wishing to pursue doctoral studies and research careers. The program emphasizes both the physiological and psychosocial aspects of aging.



Mr. Nana Bonsu

**More information
is available on
the CAH Website
or by contacting
Dr. Darren
Candow,
Gerontology
Program
Coordinator, at
Darren.Candow@
uregina.ca**

Fear of Falling Study

What are the aims and benefits of the study?

Fear of falling may negatively influence overall health. The aim of the study is to better understand fear of falling.

\$25 as a thank you for participating in the study.

Who can participate?

66 years or older

How much time will the study take?

i. Questionnaire package (30-40 minutes)

ii. Walking on a mat that measures gait at the University of Regina (40 minutes)

Contact information: Health Psychology Laboratory: 337-3296

RESEARCH REPORT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF LEISURE, IDENTITY, AND RESISTANCE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF DEMENTIA

Dr. Rebecca Genoe of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies presented her research study entitled “A phenomenological exploration of leisure, identity and resistance within the context of dementia” on February 26, 2010 at the KHS Faculty Research Seminar Series.

The purpose of the study was to “explore the meaning and experience of leisure and its role in maintaining identity in the lives of persons living with early stage dementia.”

Using a phenomenological approach as the research methodology, Dr. Genoe collected data through long interviews, participant observation, and photovoice.

The study involved 4 community dwelling participants between 59-83 yrs of age with early stage memory loss.

The study results showed that participants experienced both challenge and hope in living with dementia. They encountered changes that occurred when living with dementia and engaged in leisure activities to cope with those changes. In addition, taking part in leisure activity encouraged retention of self worth and “negotiate identity.”

According to Genoe, “Participants experienced a variety of challenges as a result of both changes that occurred with dementia, and as a result of changing expectations of others because of their diagnosis. However, they used leisure to resist threats to identity and continue to be themselves. Despite the many changes and losses associated with memory loss, participants continued to grow and develop as they find new ways to cope with disease and negotiate the changes in their lives. “

These results reveal a side of dementia that is often unnoticed because our society often focuses on the end result of the disease.

If more attention is given to the positive aspects of dementia, there will be many benefits to the person with dementia and their caregiver including sustained identity, resisted stigmas associated with memory loss and increased hope despite a difficult situation.

Article by: Riddhi Shukla



Dr. Rebecca Genoe

Despite [their] memory loss, participants continued to grow and develop as they [found] new ways to cope with disease and negotiate the changes in their lives. “

Dr. Rebecca Genoe, a CAH Member, is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. Her research interests include leisure and aging, leisure and identity, and the experience of memory loss. Correspondence about her research should be sent to rebecca.genoe@uregina.ca or 306.585.4781 .

RESEARCH REPORT: THE ROLE OF BODY IMAGE IN OLDER WOMEN'S LEISURE

Dr. Toni Liechty presented her research on January 29, 2010 at the KHS Faculty Research Seminar Series. Liechty's study, "The Role of Body Image in Older Women's Leisure,"

According to Liechty, research suggests that body image poses a constraint to women's leisure. She conducted interviews and focus groups with 13 women aged 60 to 69. Themes emerged highlighting the complexity of older women's experiences of body image and leisure.

The interviews revealed that with age the role of body image in leisure was increasingly related to ability rather than appearance. As Liechty notes, "for many, appearance concerns led to reduced participation in activities requiring a bathing suit. Many also described positive body image which facilitated participation in social, public, or active leisure."

Liechty found that "one way that body image influenced leisure was through reduced or modified participation." In other words, if body image made them feel self-conscious, they stopped participating in that activity.

Other participants noted that concern over appearance in a leisure activity "depends on the environment:" who is present and

the context of the event. For example, putting on a bathing suit around close friends was often an option whereas putting on the same bathing suit was not possible in front of colleagues or acquaintances.

In addition, some women perceive a lack or reduction in physical ability to be a cause for reduced participation in leisure activities. In fact, "ten participants agreed that, with age, their body was increasingly determined by their perceptions of health and physical ability rather than appearance."

Indeed, most of the participants viewed participation in leisure activities less in terms of appearance concerns and more with the health benefits of such activities. Moreover, unlike their younger counterparts, participants in Liechty's study, describe a freedom from body image concerns as they got older.

Ultimately, Liechty's research provides a "unique perspective of leisure constraints for older women," one that redresses previous understandings about older women's body image concerns and their role in leisure activity constraints.



Dr. Toni Liechty

"Participants agreed that, with age, their body image was increasingly determined by their perceptions of health and physical ability rather than appearance."

Dr. Toni Liechty is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. Her research interests include issues pertaining to body image and leisure; leisure across the life course; women's participation in recreation and sport; and recreation law. Correspondence about her research should be sent to toni.liechty@uregina.ca or 306.585.4912.

CAH Membership

Interested in joining the CAH?

Complete the application form available online at the CAH website.

For more information, please contact
cah@uregina.ca

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http://uregina.ca/hadjistt/centre_index.htm

CAH Small Grants Programme

The CAH is accepting applications for its Small Grants Programme. These awards are made available by the CAH to promote research pertaining to aging at the University of Regina (including federated colleges.) These awards fund pilot projects aimed to lead to the preparation of a major national application.

Information:

Number of awards for 2010/2011: 1

Amount Available for 2010/2011: \$1,500

Application Deadline: November 15, 2010

Application form are available at

[http://uregina.ca/hadjistt/PDF_files/GrantProgramme\(application\)09.pdf](http://uregina.ca/hadjistt/PDF_files/GrantProgramme(application)09.pdf)

Advertise in the CAH Newsletter

The CAH Newsletter charges a small fee for advertisements intended to recruit research participants (for research approved by the University of Regina Research Ethics Board). Similarly, we will accept advertisements of interest to seniors. In addition, we charge a fee for corporate (non University of Regina) advertising. All ads will be subject to approval by the CAH Administrator.

University of Regina Unit and Researcher Rates:

Full Page: \$100 Half Page: \$50 Quarter Page: \$35

Corporate Rates:

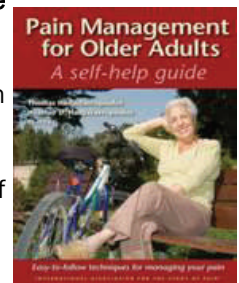
Full Page: \$150 Half Page: \$100 Quarter Page: \$85

Contact 306.337.8477 for more information.

Pain Management Study

What are the aims and benefits of the study?

- To evaluate the effectiveness of pain management techniques for older adults.
- Each participant receives a free copy of the pain self-management manual.



Who can participate?

- 65 years or older
- Chronic pain lasting 3 months or longer (not due to cancer)

How much time will the study take?

14 weeks:

- a. 3 packages of questionnaires at the beginning, at 10 weeks, and at the end of the study (40 minutes)
- b. Each week record: time spent learning about pain management, pain management techniques, medication and health care appointments (this is up to you).
- c. Weekly phone calls (2 - 5 minutes)

Contact: Clair Barefoot, Health Psychology Laboratory

337-3296

University
of Regina