

Bringing Research to LIFE

In Brief

Arctic chair recognized

The University of Manitoba has been selected from 135 proposals nationally to nominate a world leader for the new Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Arctic Geomicrobiology and Climate Change. The new federal program was created in 2008 to establish up to 20 prestigious research chairs in universities across the country.

The program will dedicate \$10 million over seven years to each chairholder and their research team to support the pursuit of excellence in research.

Phase 2 of the selection process will involve the CERC Selection Board nominating the final 20 candidates to the Tri-Agency Steering Committee, comprised of the three granting agency presidents. The CERC program will help Canada's universities compete in the global market for research talent.

The CERC program will invest \$28 million a year to attract and retain the world's most accomplished and promising minds and help Canada build a critical mass of expertise in the priority research areas of environmental sciences and technologies, natural resources and energy, health and related life sciences and technologies, and information and communication technologies.

Upcoming

Webinar:

Health Canada: Clinical Trial Inspections

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Theatre B

Bannatyne Campus,
Basic Medical Sciences Building

RSVP by Wednesday, May 13 to:
woodsm@cc.umanitoba.ca

Workshop:

Applying for SSHRC Funding: Science, Art, Alchemy or Self-Abuse?

Friday, May 29, 2009

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

540 Drake Centre

MBA Room,
I.H. Asper School of Business

Register by Wednesday, May 20th
to: hardere@cc.umanitoba.ca

Yes, you do need to move more

BY DAVID SCHMEICHEL

It's troubling enough that most Manitobans probably aren't too well-versed in the guidelines laid out by Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living (CPAG).

But those same guidelines may be setting the collective health benchmark too low, according to the findings of a team of researchers at the University of Manitoba.

In a recent research article by Elizabeth Ready and her colleagues – prepared in conjunction with the province-wide *in motion* initiative on public health – it's suggested the CPAG's recommended activity levels are too low, since they include both specific leisure-time activities (jogging, biking or aerobics) and any activities carried out over the course of a normal day (walking, household chores, yard work, etc).

Prior national surveys on physical activity, however, focused exclusively on leisure-time endeavors, resulting in a significant disconnect between the national stats (which found 49 per cent of Canadians met recommended CPAG levels) and the *in motion* team's own survey of Manitobans, which found a whopping 69.5 per cent made the CPAG grade.

"We were surprised to find quite a lot of Manitobans seemed to be meeting the CPAG recommendations," said Ready, who works out of the Health Leisure and Human Performance Research Institute in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management.

"But Manitoba still has increasing diabetes rates and obesity rates, so it seems to be a contradiction – a suggestion that maybe the activity levels aren't high enough."

In conducting the Manitoba survey (a random sampling of 6,536 adults, further broken down according to regional health authority catchments), researchers analyzed both leisure and non-leisure activities, since the CPAG recommends incorporating physical activity into all aspects of daily life.

As part of a new federal initiative, Roberta Woodgate from the Faculty of Nursing will lead a team in examining how First Nations children, and their families, experience and perceive disabilities.

Over the years researchers have examined the impact disabilities have on Canadian children and their families, but little information has been gathered on First Nations families and children. Woodgate's study will rectify this; her project is one of five across the country that recently received funding to examine issues surrounding disabilities.

On April 24, the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, announced funding for a new program called Bright Futures for Kids with Disabilities, which supports research



Photo by David Schmeichel

Kinesiology & Recreation Management professor Elizabeth Ready works in conjunction with the province-wide *in motion* initiative on public health to analyze recommended activity levels.

And where most national surveys measured whether or not people met a global threshold of activity based on energy expenditure, the *in motion* team categorized their respondents' activity by duration and intensity (light, moderate or vigorous) -- a system much more closely in line with the CPAG's current recommendations.

Given the aforementioned paradox, researchers are now recommending a revamp of those CPAG guidelines, so they instead focus on physical activities that fall outside of our daily routines.

"If there are this many people meeting the (CPAG) guidelines – yet there are still this many people who have diabetes and heart disease and are overweight – our suggestion is maybe re-looking at the guidelines to see if they're appropriate," Ready said.

"That's what they've done in the States. They've said you need 30

minutes of moderate activity daily, above and beyond routine activities like walking to the fridge or brushing your teeth."

In addition to jibing with recent changes to the CPAG's equivalent in the U.S., Ready's findings also coincide with an ongoing reevaluation of the CPAG already underway here in Canada.

If and when the CPAG guidelines are updated, Ready hopes increased efforts are made to bring them to the public's attention.

"There's a need to promote the guidelines more," she said. "If they are revising them, now would be a good time to bring them back out with a splash."

To read the *in motion* team's article in full, check out the National Research Council Canada website: <http://pubs.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/rp-ps/inDetail.jsp?jcode=apnm&vol=34&is=2&lang=eng>

Enabling better lives for disabled

aimed at improving the lives of disabled children and their families.

The program, funded in part by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, will distribute \$3.9 million over three years.

Canadian researchers have achieved international success in helping restore physical function to disabled children by way of the artificial limbs and mobility devices created in our nation's laboratories.

But now our researchers want to learn how disabled children can lead fuller, higher-quality, lives.

Adopting a participatory and culturally relevant approach, Woodgate and her team of academics, doctors, policy-makers, and service providers, will detail the perspectives and

experiences of First Nations families of children with disabilities.

Woodgate will also examine what needs they have and what services they use; how the child's role in everyday life is viewed by the family and community, and how the physical, individual, social, environmental, and cultural conditions contribute to how such families of children with disabilities participate in everyday life.

A variety of data collection methods will be used, including open-ended interviews, photovoice, and a policy and document review.

The team views the study as essential to advancing Jordan's Principle, the child-first principle developed to honour the death of a disabled Norway House Cree Nation child.

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