



CENTRE ON AGING

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Centre on Aging

The Centre on Aging, established on July 1, 1982, is a university-wide research Centre with a mandate to conduct, encourage, integrate, and disseminate research on all aspects of aging.

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Canada Research Chair in Healthy Aging
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Faculty of Medicine

The Centre on Aging News is published three times a year and is available on our web site or by request. Direct comments and inquiries to

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The future of aging: What will it look like?

On November 9, 2011, Dr. David Barnard, University of Manitoba President and Vice Chancellor, hosted his Visionary Conversations Speaker Series, which was introduced this year.

Four Centre on Aging research affiliates took part in a panel discussing “Our aging society: Are we ready?”

Dr. Barnard stated: ‘Blame the baby boomers seems to be the name of the game when it comes to our aging population and the impact this large group of individuals will have on everything from our health care system to what we buy at the grocery store.’

An expert panel facilitated discussions focusing on the challenges

and opportunities for successful aging.

Panel members included Centre on Aging Director, Dr. Verena Menec (Canada Research Chair in Healthy Aging, Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine), Centre on Aging Research Affiliates, Dr. Michelle Porter (Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management), Dr. Malcolm Smith (Department of Marketing, I.H. Asper School of Business), and Dr. Philip St. John (Department of Internal Medicine/Geriatric Medicine, Faculty of Medicine).

Each speaker was given five minutes to speak about a particular area of aging. Dr. Menec spoke about the myths and assumptions of the tsunami of aging. As 2011 marks the first year that baby boomers turn 65, the alarms sounding off on the impending crisis is nothing to be alarmed about says Dr. Menec, as the retirement of the baby boomers will take 20 years. Thinking of the aging population in this way should diminish the paranoia of the mass wave of retirement.

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The future of aging continued from page 1 ...

Dr. St. John supported Dr. Menec's comments through his discussion. He identified that the promotion of healthy aging and a healthy lifestyle has contributed to individuals generally living longer lives than in past generations. Dr. St. John pointed out that while many people live with some kind of chronic disease, they are still able to go about their daily life.

Dr. Smith used a humorous approach to support his discussion on ageism in society, using examples of greeting cards he has collected over the years. Dr. Smith showed how society contributes to the negative stereotyping of aging and how those perceptions overlap with today's thoughts on aging. While the baby boomers may be retiring—many of the baby boomers are financially stable. He pointed out that this cohort controls over 55 percent of discretionary spending in Canada.

Dr. Porter concluded the panel discussing the bias surrounding older drivers and some of her research on

the CanDrive project. While many people stereotype older drivers as dangerous, Dr. Porter pointed out that older drivers adjust their driving and their crash and fatality rates are actually lower than public perception would have it.

After the presentations, Dr. Barnard opened the floor up for questions. Many questions were focused on health care issues—how can we better address these issues to provide our seniors with better care? What can be done to provide healthcare workers with better working conditions and support, as these front line workers interact regularly with the seniors who need home care. A lively discussion ensued, as there were more questions from the audience than time available.

Visionary conversations online

You can view the session “Our Aging Society: Are We Ready?” and previous conversations including “Livable Cities” (Dr. Richard Milgrom, Research Affiliate) at <http://umanitoba.ca/visionaryconversations>.

Graduate Specialization in Aging awarded

Congratulations to Lindsay Carpentier, Master's of Social Work, who successfully completed the Graduate Specialization in Aging certificate. Lindsay convoked in October; her thesis advisor was Dr. Don Fuchs, Centre on Aging Research Affiliate. To receive her certificate, Lindsay completed a major project and wrote a synthesis paper *Animal assisted therapy in long term care with dementia patients*.

To receive the certificate, graduate students must complete the two core aging courses; complete a thesis or major project in the area of aging, with at least one Centre on Aging Research Affiliate sitting on the committee; and publicly present the thesis or major project.

Lindsay is the fourth graduate student to receive the certificate since the program was established in 2007. We wish Lindsay well in her future endeavours.



Lindsay Carpentier (left) shows her Graduate Specialization in Aging certificate with Centre Director, Dr. Verena Menec (right)

Granny power: in support of African grandmothers

On November 28, 2011, the Centre on Aging and the Manitoba Seniors & Healthy Aging Secretariat co-hosted an interactive seminar entitled “Granny Power” facilitated by Peggy Edwards. Ms. Edwards is a health promotion consultant, writer, and activist for social justice, specializing in issues related to aging and gender. She is the primary author of two influential World Health Organization reports on aging policy and women and aging.

Her presentation focused on the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. Affiliated with the Stephen Lewis Foundation, this Campaign is working to mobilize support in Canada for those African grandmothers that are caring for millions of children affected with HIV and AIDS. In 2009–2010, Ms. Edwards studied the Campaign and asked “How do we engage, nurture and sustain older women as advocates in civil society?” The answers were reflected in a 10-minute video shared with the 30 attendees. Ms. Edwards’s presentation departed from the traditional presentation as she sought the opinions of those in attendance, engaging the audience through conversation rather than a typical question and answer presentation.

“AIDS in Africa is a raging forest fire”

A legend from the video shown, tells the story of a great forest fire that terrifies all of the animals in the woods—except one: the hummingbird. In the midst of the fire, this tiny bird flies upstream and tirelessly drops one bead of water after another onto the raging fire. When asked what she is doing, the hummingbird replies “I’m doing what I can.” So too, are the hardworking grandmothers who have buried their own children and are now caring for their grandchildren, and the Canadians advocating for change, one step at a time.

Currently, over 240 groups of grandmothers and ‘grand-others’ across Canada are raising funds to support grassroots African projects, increasing Canadian awareness, and advocating to ensure just laws and policies are in place to make life easier for these grandmothers and orphaned children. Although the



Peggy Edwards leads a discussion following a short video on African grandmothers caring for their grandchildren

problems and solutions to this issue are complex and long-term, the Campaign is making a difference in the future of Africa’s next generation, in the conscience of Canadians, and in the way older women are viewed in society. Through group work and discussion, attendees reflected on these impacts and what empowers older women today.

For more information on this project, visit the following links:

www.grandmotherscampaign.org

www.stephenlewisfoundation.org

Grands ‘n’ More Winnipeg chapter: grandsnmore@gmail.com

Research affiliate updates

Dr. Ruth Barclay-Goddard

Dr. Ruth Barclay-Goddard, Assistant Professor, Physical Therapy, School of Medical Rehabilitation, Faculty of Medicine, Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging, received a Manitoba Health Research Council (MHRC) establishment grant for her research on improving domains of health related quality of life and health related quality of life perception after stroke, and an operating grant for a model of community ambulation after stroke.

As the population of Manitoba ages, the numbers of people living with stroke in the community will likely increase. Health related quality of life (HRQL) consists of the components of physical function, mental health, and participation in the community. Many individuals who have had a stroke describe low HRQL. Improving the various components of HRQL, thereby improving overall HRQL, is a goal of rehabilitation professionals and those with stroke. It is important to ensure that people with stroke have what they consider a good HRQL. It is also important to understand the concepts of changes in the perception of HRQL over time after stroke and how rehabilitation professionals can facilitate a positive perspective.

Dr. Barclay-Goddard will evaluate rehabilitation related programs aimed at improving physical function, community participation, and HRQL after stroke. She is also developing a model of community ambulation with which to explore the relationships between mobility, health perceptions, gait speed, and the amount of outdoor physical activity that a person does after stroke in relation to community ambulation. The research has potential application to clinical practice in rehabilitation, ultimately increasing the HRQL of Manitobans with stroke.

Dr. Malcolm Doupe

Dr. Malcolm Doupe is the recipient of a 2011–2012 MHRC establishment grant. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Senior Research Scientist, Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, University of Manitoba, and Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging.

Dr. Doupe states that while nursing homes provide essential care to a growing number of older adults, little Canadian research has measured the quality of, and factors affecting, nursing home care. It is difficult to accurately measure markers of poor quality care (e.g., daily restraint use) and factors affecting this care (e.g., resident illness, staffing levels).

Dr. Doupe will link new clinical datasets (Minimum Dataset or MDS 2.0© for nursing home residents, Emergency Department Information System or EDIS) with administrative data housed at Manitoba Centre for Health Policy. This novel linkage provides many advantages for studying nursing home quality care. MDS 2.0© provides valid markers of quality care, richly describes residents' clinical needs, and measures the type and volume of staffing care provided. EDIS also captures unique parameters of Emergency Department care (e.g., duration, services provided) for nursing home residents. Novel answers to key policy questions will emerge from these linkages, including how staffing levels and nursing home ownership type impact quality care, and the patterns and risk factors of Emergency Department use by nursing home residents. It is anticipated that this knowledge will contribute strongly to the academic literature, will help guide policy development, and will serve as a platform for future research.

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Did you know ...

The Centre on Aging will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2012? To mark this occasion, the Centre will host a series of events throughout the year to celebrate this milestone.

Dr. Debbie Kelly

Dr. Debbie Kelly, Canada Research Chair in Comparative Cognition, Associate Professor, Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging, uses avian models to investigate how aging affects the brain's hemispheric processing of spatial information for navigation.



Dr. Kelly discusses her research on spatial cognition in pigeons and how it can be applied to spatial cognition in humans during her November presentation at the Centre's research seminar series.

Welcome and thank you

Since 2010, the Centre on Aging has welcomed a number of recent affiliates. The following individuals joined the Centre on Aging:

- Genevieve Thompson, PhD, Faculty of Nursing
- Debbie Kelly, PhD, Department of Psychology
- Elaine Mordoch, PhD, Faculty of Nursing
- Michael Zhang, PhD, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Adjunct Professor, University of Winnipeg

All mobile species need to orient themselves to their surroundings before they can navigate. Studies have shown that features, like trees or buildings, and geometry, as in distance and direction, play fundamental roles. In fact, all species studied to date have shown what researchers call "an obligatory encoding of geometry."

However we know little about the type or amount of geometry encoded by the brain change over a lifespan. As people age, their cognitive abilities, including their ability to orient themselves, decline. Research has shown that aging affects how the left and right side of the brain work to complete a task. Most work on this issue has used brain-scanning equipment that requires subjects to remain still.

As Canada Research Chair in Comparative Cognition, Dr. Kelly is examining the effects of aging on "hemispheric asymmetries" using natural tasks. To do this, she is studying brain function in birds. Birds' brains work similarly to those of humans in that they use different hemispheres to perform different tasks. In fact, the brain hemispheres work more independently in birds, making them a better test subject for primary study. She will learn how aging and ecology influence how birds encode and weigh spatial cues, and how the two brain hemispheres process that information. Ultimately, her research will combine the data from humans and animals to better understand spatial cognition. The result will be a useful tool for the early detection of spatial degeneration disorders like Alzheimer's disease.

- Laura Funk, PhD, Department of Sociology
- Danielle Bouchard, PhD, Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management

Thank you

Research affiliates continue to support the Centre with 38 reappointments since 2010.

We thank the following research affiliates for their time and contributions to the Centre on Aging: Bonnie Hallman, PhD; Bert Taylor, PhD; Frances Kuo, PhD.

Age irrelevant to remembering radio ads; jingles help recall for young and old alike

Researchers have shown that older adults are just as good at recognizing and remembering advertising content in a radio broadcast as young adults are. And a simple memory aid such as rhyming is just as useful for younger listeners as it is for older ones.

Traditionally, aging is seen as a time when cognitive deficits appear. Knowing how to market effectively to older adults is important for businesses that hope to thrive in our rapidly-aging society. But the little research that has been done into the mental functioning of older consumers has usually concentrated on TV and print advertising, rather than radio.

The goal of mnemonic (memory-helping) techniques is to improve the way people record information (encoding efficiency). Various strategies, such as peg word, first letter, key word, link chain, and Yodai, as well as the use of music, story telling and imagery, can help people to organize and retain information—but first, they have to learn how to use those strategies.

This study was designed to test whether older adults would fare worse than younger adults in remembering radio ads, whether a simple memory aid such as rhyming would help either group to remember the ads better, and whether either group would do better at remembering the ads immediately after hearing them compared to one week later.

The researchers carefully embedded the ads in “realistic” radio programs, using music and a generic format that was as non-offensive as possible to all participants. Since anxiety is known to reduce memory scores, they also took pains to ensure that the testing was done in a familiar setting so that participants would be relaxed.

Previous research has suggested that older adults in general remember less advertising content than younger adults do. Other research has suggested that mnemonic techniques that are complicated or use visual imagery help younger adults more than older adults. This study shows that memory decline for radio ads may not be inevitable, and that mnemonics that are “older adult friendly” will enhance memory for both younger and older adults. These findings are worth pursuing, not only for advertisers, but also for government, public service, and senior-oriented service agencies of all kinds.

Reference

Malcolm Smith and Mark R. Phillips Jr. (2001). Age differences in memory for radio advertisements: the role of mnemonics. *Journal of Business Research*. 53(2), 101–109.

This article was summarized by Margaret McKenty

Tax tip

The Centre on Aging gratefully accepts donations from individuals, corporations, and other organizations who supports the Centre's goals. Donors will receive a receipt for tax purposes.

In 2011, the combined federal and provincial tax credits is 25% for the first \$200 of donations and 46% on amounts over \$200. Donate before the end of the year to claim the charitable tax credit in 2011.

Gifts can be designated for specific purposes such as guest lectures, fellowships or scholarships such as the Jack MacDonell Scholarship in Aging, or the Centre's endowment fund.

University of Manitoba alumni who donate to the Annual Giving program can ask that their contributions be targeted to the Centre on Aging.

Save the date! Annual research forum 2012

Michael Sharratt, PhD, will speak about the Schlegel Villages at the Centre on Aging's annual research forum on March 13, 2012. Dr. Sharratt is a Professor in the Department of Kinesiology, University of Waterloo, and Executive Director, Schlegel-University of Waterloo Research Institute for Aging.

Dr. Sharratt will provide information on the Schlegel Villages and the development of research partnerships between the Ontario government, the post secondary sector, and Schlegel Villages.

These partnerships were instrumental in developing a centre of excellence for research, training, and innovation in senior health care and wellness at the University of Waterloo. Together, health care workers, researchers, students, and residents will work and learn alongside one another.

Currently there are 11 Schlegel Villages in Ontario, housing approximately 3000 seniors. Using a village concept as a model, Villages are developed in three stages; building of a long term care home, the development in the later stages of assisted and independent living facilities, and a primary care health centre to prepare communities for the aging population.

The first phase is scheduled for construction in 2012, with completion scheduled for spring 2014.

Learn more about the Schlegel Villages:
www.schlegelvillages.com

Presentation information

Tuesday, March 13, 2012

Senate Chambers, E3-262 Engineering Information and Technology Complex (EITC)
University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus

About the presenter

Dr. Sharratt's research spans the age continuum from children to youth to older adults. He was instrumental in creating a nutrition and physical activity program (Kids in Action) at the University of Waterloo (UW) Fitness, was Dean of the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at UW, and helped to establish the Schlegel Research Institute for Aging at UW. He was also involved with the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults.

Student awards and fellowships available now

Each year, the Centre on Aging offers and adjudicates a number of awards and fellowships—open to undergraduate and graduate students—in the area of aging. Applications for student awards and fellowships tenable in the 2012–2013 academic year are now being accepted. The following awards are open to students:

- Centre on Aging Betty Havens Memorial Graduate Fellowship (\$4000.00)
- Jack MacDonell Scholarship for Research in Aging (\$4000.00)
- Alzheimer Society Graduate Student Fellowship (Two awards of \$4000.00 each)
- Esther & Samuel Milmot Scholarship (\$500.00)

Application process

If you know of any students who are focusing on aging in their studies, direct them to the Centre's Web site (www.umanitoba.ca/centres/aging) to review information about each award, criteria for adjudication, and download the application form.

The application forms must be filled out as specified and submitted to the Centre on Aging by **March 12, 2012**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Upcoming Centre on Aging event: 2012 Spring Research Symposium



Join us for our 29th Annual Spring Research Symposium, which will take place

Monday, May 7, 2012

8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

727 McDermot Avenue

Bannatyne Campus, University of Manitoba

Symposium plenary sessions

Dr. Neena Chappell, University of Victoria, the founding Director of the Centre on Aging, will present the opening keynote. Dr. Chappell will present her research findings on caregiving.

Speaking at the afternoon plenary will be a panel of experts discussing *How should the health care system respond to the aging population?* Dr. David Strang, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Dr. Philip St. John, Geriatric Section, Faculty of Medicine, and Ms. Marlene Graceffo, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, will provide their perspectives.

Concurrent sessions

Dr. Peter Zahradka, team leader at the Canadian Centre for Agri-food Research in Health and Medicine, and Professor, Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, St. Boniface Research Centre, will discuss how nutritional interventions, with novel supplements or food, can help in the treatment or prevention of disease.

Dr. Karen Duncan, Family Social Sciences will present findings from her research on the economic costs of caregiving. Mr. Bob Thompson will provide his perspective as a caregiver.

Dr. Nadine Nowatzki, Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre on Aging and Dr. Evelyn Forget, Community Health Sciences, will speak to the topic of economic security.

Dr. Nowatzki will describe patterns of poverty with a particular focus on older women. Focusing on health economics in several areas, Dr. Forget will discuss her work studying the relationship between poverty mitigation and health, conducting health services research, and doing cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit studies.

Ms. Jaelyn Volk will provide an introduction to the history and principles of Music Therapy, discuss different therapy models and techniques, and identify the many populations served by the discipline. She received her Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy and certification in Neurological Music Therapy.

Dr. Bill Kops, Extended Education, will speak about the concept of lifelong learning and identify the programs that are being developed for Extended Education at the University of Manitoba.

Ms. Mary Shariff, LL.M., Faculty of Law, will discuss how the principles of dignity and autonomy operate in the legal structure that currently governs end-of-life care in Canada.

Registration information will be available in January.

Research seminar series presentations

Join us for our continuing seminar series in February!

PARO: A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED ROBOTIC ANIMAL HELPING NURSING HOME RESIDENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS COMMUNICATE AND INTERACT

Lorna Guse, PhD, Associate Professor & Elaine Mordoch, PhD, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing
Monday, February 6, 2012 | 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm
348 Helen Glass Centre | Fort Garry Campus

THE INVOLVEMENT OF NF-κB SIGNALING IN MEMORY IMPAIRMENT IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ben Albensi, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics, Faculty of Medicine
Friday, March 2, 2012 | 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm
405 Brodie Centre | Bannatyne Campus