

Spotlight on research: Research affiliate profiles



Editor's note: Over the summer, the Centre on Aging had a student volunteer interview a number of Affiliates about their research. These articles will appear in the newsletter over the next three issues.

Arman Iranpour started Grade 11 in September 2013 and is an International Baccalaureate student at Kelvin High School. He is actively involved in sports and volunteer activities. As part of his studies, he completed community service work by volunteering. During the month of July 2013, Arman interviewed Centre on Aging research affiliates about their research interests.

Dr. Genevieve Thompson

By Arman Iranpour



Dr. Genevieve Thompson is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Nursing, and is a palliative care researcher. She has her Ph.D. in Community Health Sciences. Dr. Thompson was awarded a CIHR New Investigator Award in 2012 allowing her more time to pursue further research in her field. Research is now the major portion of her work.

Dr. Thompson's research looks at palliative care, which is the care people receive before passing away and the prevention of end-of-life suffering. She also studies the care older people with dementia receive at the end of their lives. Dr. Thompson feels that there isn't enough awareness for dying people with dementia and that we need to improve the quality of end-of-life care and how well families are prepared for the death of their loved one. In addition, she looks at how health care aides provide end-of-life care for patients with dementia and how we can improve their experience.

When asked about how she got into this field of research, Dr. Thompson said that it was mainly through her Ph.D. work where she learned about the lack of quality palliative care for older adults with dementia. She realized that people with dementia don't receive enough attention and this sprung her into the field. Knowing that people are suffering and not receiving quality end-of-life care is the motivation behind her work. One of her family members has been affected by dementia and this drives her to improve the quality of life for people living with and dying from this disease.

When asked why she feels her work is important, Dr. Thompson said that "people with dementia can't speak for themselves". Simply put, she hopes to find a "cure for bad dying". She believes that her research will help families deal with the situation better and will provide nurses with better resources and methods, which will allow them to give better care.

Dr. Michelle Porter

By Arman Iranpour

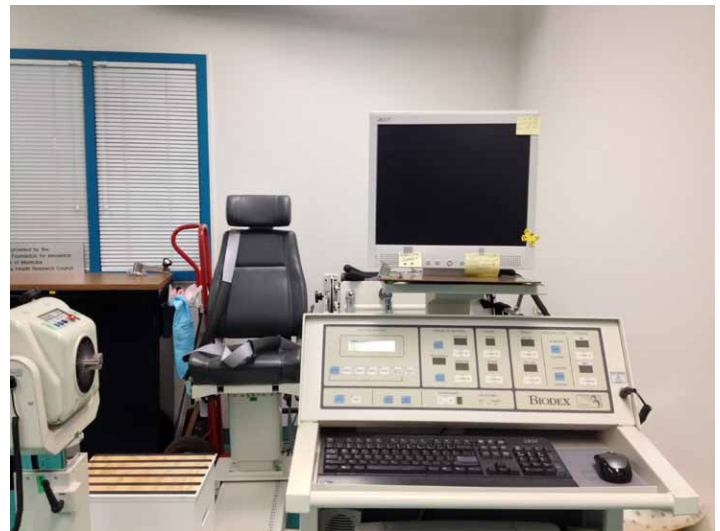
Dr. Michelle Porter is a Professor and researcher in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management. Her work primarily focuses on mobility with aging; however she also does research in areas relating to neuromuscular adaptations. She has her PhD. in Kinesiology. Her mobility and aging lab is equipped with “an isokinetic dynamometer, global positioning system (GPS) technology, a portable metabolic system, a gait trainer treadmill, EMG equipment, strength training equipment, and digital video technology.”¹ Equipment and technology are used for physical testing and data collection.



Dr. Michelle Porter poses alongside some of the equipment in her lab that is used to conduct her research for the Candrive Study.

One of her more recent and more important projects is the Candrive study. Composed of health-care professionals across the country, this national research team is dedicated to “improving the safety and promoting the rights of safe older drivers.”² Dr. Porter is the lead researcher in Manitoba for this study. Research and data are also obtained through various written tests and physical exercises. The findings of this study are very important because driving is the most common form of transportation for seniors. This research will provide important information and resources for physicians when determining who should keep their license as people age. Through this study, new, more accurate tests for licensing at old age will be developed.

Studies and reports have shown that there is a correlation between seniors losing their license, and



Research equipment used in Dr. Porter's lab

depression. In an article published by the Psychiatric Times, it is stated that “depression and substantial physical inactivity may follow driver’s license revocation.”³ Dr. Porter feels that it is important that older adults are trained and given the resources to be able to stay on the road to keep them active.

Dr. Porter said that she never expected to get into this field of research. She became interested when she was on a road trip with an older driver and began to observe how the person was driving. She was intrigued and decided to enhance her knowledge on the topic by doing some research. Dr. Porter said that initially, ‘her interest was more in aging,’ as she worked with seniors and volunteered at a long term care facility instructing exercise programs. Her main motivation behind her work is to help ‘improve the quality of life of older adults and to do positive things for people so that they can enjoy active and healthy aging.’

References

- ¹ umanitoba.ca/faculties/kinrec/research/lab_offices/aging_mob_lab/index
- ² umanitoba.ca/faculties/kinrec/research/lab_offices/aging_mob_lab/candrive
- ³ www.psychiatrictimes.com/articles/elderly-driver

Dr. Jason Peeler

By Arman Iranpour



Dr. Jason Peeler is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Anatomy & Cell Science, a Course Director for undergraduate medical education in the Faculty of Medicine, Research Associate of the David & Ruth Asper Research Centre and a Centre on Aging Research Affiliate. Dr. Peeler has academic

training in Kinesiology, athletic therapy, and has done clinical work. He has a lab at Pan Am Clinic where he treats clients and conducts his research. His area of research is clinical orthopaedics and musculoskeletal (bones, joints, tissue, muscles, etc.) anatomy, with more focus on the knee. Dr. Peeler also does much of his research and clinical work on anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries, looking at how these injuries are treated, and how more and perhaps better treatments can be developed.

An example is his “accuracy and reliability of anterior cruciate ligament clinical examination in a multidisciplinary sports medicine setting” publication, which explored the accuracy and reliability of health professionals when clinically examining ACL injuries. Through this study, Dr. Peeler concluded that “in sports medicine, unreliable or inaccurate clinical examination confounds the clinician’s ability to make informed decisions regarding appropriate patient referral and

treatment interventions.”¹

Injuries can lead to other mental and physical problems later in life, which is why Dr. Peeler believes that it is important to develop more long term treatments and rehabilitation methods. Through his work, Dr. Peeler hopes to make a positive impact on the lives of people with injuries, and to help them maintain health and mobility. His aim is to decrease recovery time through developing improved rehabilitation methods.

When asked how he got into this field of research, Dr. Peeler said that he tore his ACL when he was younger. While recovering from his injury, Dr. Peeler realized that the treatments for these types of injuries were questionable. This sparked his interest in the field and he eventually became a therapist. He now devotes his time to developing better treatment techniques and more effective rehabilitation methods because of his own personal experience as a patient.

Reference

¹ Peeler, J., Leiter, J., & MacDonald, P. (2010). Accuracy and reliability of anterior cruciate ligament clinical examination in a multidisciplinary sports medicine setting. *Clin J Sport.* 20(2):80–5. doi: 10.1097/JSM.0b013e3181ceca45.

CENTRE ON AGING RESEARCH DATABASE

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN AGING-RELATED RESEARCH STUDIES?

The year 2011 marked a significant turning point. It was the year the first wave of baby boomers turned 65. In 2016, it is projected that there will be more than 100,000 Canadians aged 65 and over. As the demographics continue to change, the need to understand how we are aging becomes more important. Researchers are often looking for participants for their research studies. The Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba, has created an electronic database of individuals 55 years and over who are willing to be contacted by researchers about whether they would like to participate in aging-related studies.

We would like to invite you to become part of this database. The database would contain your name, mailing address, phone number, age, and gender. It is managed by Centre on Aging staff.

By becoming part of the database, you are only consenting to being contacted by researchers whether you actually participate in a study is entirely your choice. Research projects and requests for participants vary. Like several people when researchers may need participants, you may or may not be contacted by a researcher. You can opt to have your information removed from the database at any time.

Your contact information will only be shared with Centre on Aging researchers whose projects have been approved by a research ethics board at the University of Manitoba.

To become part of the database

• Call 204.474.8744 or email becomepart@umanitoba.ca the Centre on Aging to find out more about becoming a research participant.

• Visit the online form <http://umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/informed/index.html>

For more information, visit umanitoba.ca/centres/aging Centre on Aging

Be part of the research!

Did you know that the Centre on Aging established a participant research database? Participants who sign up must be age 55 years and over, are willing to be contacted by researchers for future aging-related studies, and provide basic contact information.

By becoming part of the database, you are only consenting to being contacted by researchers; whether you actually participate in a study is entirely your choice. Research projects and requests for participants vary. You can opt to have your information removed from the database at any time.

Your contact information will only be shared with Centre on Aging researchers whose projects have been approved by a research ethics board at the University of Manitoba. For more information or to participate, contact the Centre on Aging or complete the online form: umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/involved/index.

It's not just about being heard ...

Summarized by Centre on Aging staff

As people age, hearing loss becomes a reality for many people. People begin to experience hearing loss in their 40s and by the time people reach their 70s, about half are affected by some form of gradual hearing loss. Hearing loss is the third most common chronic disability that affects the everyday life of older people, yet many people will avoid seeking immediate treatment. Dr. Pichora-Fuller notes that some older adults wait up to ten or more years before getting professional treatment because they want to avoid the stigma of wearing a hearing aid and being viewed as someone old, allowing the situation to worsen.

On November 8, 2013, Dr. Kathy Pichora-Fuller's presentation drew a large crowd to discuss Hearing, cognition and communication in older adults at Bannatyne campus. As a rehabilitative audiologist, Dr. Pichora-Fuller's research lab focuses on auditory-cognitive interactions. She is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto, Mississauga.

Recent studies from the United States suggest an older adult's cognition and hearing problems may be related. Most notably, Dr. Pichora-Fuller identified research by Frank Lin and George Gates, who have found an association between hearing loss and the onset of future dementia. While it appears that there may be a linkage between cognitive changes and hearing loss in later life, the link for these associations is unclear. Lin and Gates hypothesize that the connection may be due to social activity.

When a person is experiencing hearing loss and stops participating in social activities, that person uses the brain less, which might cause the brain to deteriorate if not used noted Dr. Pichora-Fuller. As Lin and Gates hypothesized, hearing loss can lead to poor physical functioning and falls; increased stress or changes in brain activity; or reduced communication with others.

Although older adults do experience losses in hearing ability, Dr. Pichora-Fuller discussed how older adults, in general, are able to compensate for loss. For example, older adults appear to be particularly good at using the context of words to understand what is being said.

Following Dr. Pichora-Fuller's presentation and a short break, the presentation reconvened with a panel presentation. Joining Dr. Pichora-Fuller were Gladys Nielsen (Volunteer, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association), Kristy Mackie (Audiologist, Central Speech and Hearing Clinic), Dave Schellenberg, (Acting Chair, Manitoba Council on Aging) and Kevin McNabb (Grant Park Hearing). Dr. Verena Menec served as moderator of the panel. Panelists answered questions from the audience and further expanded on some of the points Dr. Pichora-Fuller brought up during her presentation.

Many audience members expressed their appreciation to the Centre for bringing people together to talk about hearing loss, as this is a topic that has not been fully explored or discussed.



Panel members (left to right) Kevin McNabb, Kathy Pichora-Fuller, Verena Menec, Gladys Nielsen (Volunteer, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association), Kristy Mackie (Audiologist, Central Speech and Hearing Clinic), and Dave Schellenberg (Acting Chair, Manitoba Council on Aging).

Research affiliate updates

Grants

Dr. Corey Mackenzie and **Dr. Kerstin Roger** are members of a network team that received nearly \$3 million in funding from the Movember Foundation to help men deal with mental health issues. Over a three-year period, Drs. Mackenzie and Roger's sub-project will focus on older men by focussing on Men's sheds, which originated in Australia, and the programs integrate older men through traditional male activities.

Dr. Jo-Ann Sawatzky and colleagues received a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) KPE Planning Grant for their project entitled *Diversifying our ways of knowing cardiovascular health among First Nations people in Manitoba; Cross-sectorial collaboration for advancing the base of evidence*. (\$25,000)

Dr. Michelle Lobchuk and colleagues received a Grace Hospital Patient Care Research Award for their project entitled *Incorporation of Mobile Applications in Clinical Nursing Practice*. (\$5,514)

Publications

Dr. Christopher J. Fries' forthcoming article "Older adults' use of complementary and alternative medical therapies to resist biomedicalization of aging" will be published in the *Journal of Aging Studies*. Dr. Fries' research was partly supported through his Centre on Aging research fellowship award, which he received for the 2011–2012 academic year.

Newall, N. E. G., & **Menec, V. H.** (in press). Targeting socially isolated older adults: A process evaluation of the Senior Centre Without Walls social and educational program. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*. (Advance online publication doi: 10.1177/0733464813510063).

Cadonic, C. & **Albensi, B. C.** (in press). Memory deficits and transcription factor activity following traumatic brain injury in F. Sadaka, MD & T. Quinn, MD (Eds.) *Traumatic Brain Injury*. St Louis University, USA: InTech.

Media

Dr. Danielle Bouchard was featured in several news media outlets on November 19, 2013. Her research using treadmills in the workplace will be tested at Misericordia Hospital in its Provincial Health Contact Centre, where four stations are set up and will involve 22 participants. For more details, view www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/office-installs-desk-treadmills-to-ramp-up-productivity-1.2432158.

Presentations

Policy and death: What the right to die means for lawmakers, healthcare providers and citizens

On November 7, 2013, Centre on Aging Director **Dr. Verena Menec** and Research Affiliate **Dr. Mary Shariff** were two of the panel members for this cafe politique presentation sponsored by the Manitoba Institute for Policy Research and co-sponsored by the Centre on Aging and the Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics.

On September 13, 2013, **Dr. Malcolm Smith** and Dr. Christine Kreklewetz co-presented *Is narrative an effective method for helping Health Care Aides learn about long-term care residents?: A pilot study* as part of the HLHP Research Institute's Seminar Series that was also co-sponsored by the Centre on Aging.

Research seminar series

Dr. Shawn Bugden presented at the Centre's research seminar series on October 9, 2013. Dr. Bugden's talk focused on two areas: a review of the records of the Canada Vigilance Adverse Reaction Database to assess the reporting of cardiac events with citalopram/escitalopram in Canada, as part of the fellowship award he received from the Centre; and his research conducted on polypharmacy, which is the use of multiple medications. Using administrative data from the Pharmacare's Drug Programs Information Network (DPIN) and a recently completed chart review of 500 personal care home beds serviced by hospital pharmacists, Dr. Bugden also looked at the utility of

using polypharmacy as an indicator of prescribing quality and selected Beer's criteria medications, which are considered to be higher risk for older adults.

Dr. Marcia Friesen presented on November 14, 2013 at the research seminar series. Dr. Friesen discussed the development of an app for a pilot project at a long term care centre facility in Winnipeg. The app replicated paper chart forms used to assess patient wound care with tablets and smartphones. Participants in the pilot study were asked only to assess the design and functionality of the app during a specific time frame.

New research affiliate

Dr. Sandra Webber, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Therapy, School of Medical Rehabilitation, Faculty of Medicine was appointed as a Research Affiliate to the Centre on Aging this past fall.

Congratulations

Congratulations to **Dr. Marcia Friesen**, P.Eng., FEC who was recently named President of the Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of Manitoba (APEGM) this past October. She will serve as President for a one-year term. Dr. Friesen is a 2013–2014 recipient of the Centre on Aging's research fellowship award.

Centre news

Advisory board updates

The Centre on Aging welcomed five new members to the Advisory Board. **Dr. Corey Mackenzie** has been appointed Chair of the Advisory Board.

We also welcome **Dr. Michelle Porter**, **Dr. Christina Lengyel**, and **Dr. Shahin Shooshtari** who were appointed to the Centre's advisory board as representatives for the University. **Dr. Gina Sylvestre** was appointed to the advisory board as the representative for the University of Winnipeg.

Ms. Karen Beck has been re-appointed for a second term on the advisory board.

Become a friend of the Centre!

The Friends of the Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba are individuals who want to keep in touch with the Centre by receiving information updates, attending events, or volunteering their time for the annual spring research symposium or other committees.

To become a friend, complete the application available on the Centre's Web site: umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/involved/1440.

SAVE THE DATE!

We're doing things a little differently this year ...

The Centre on Aging will be holding their annual Spring Research Symposium on **May 5–6, 2014**. You read that right, this year's symposium will be held over two days! The focus will be on global aging, integrating presentations with workshops.

If you're not on our mailing list, contact us at coaman@umanitoba.ca to stay up-to-date on this year's symposium! More details will be provided in the next few months.



Photo credit: Garry Knight

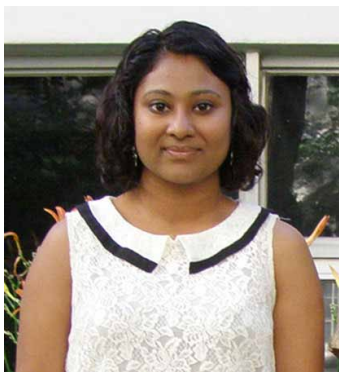
Graduate Specialization in Aging recipients

Since 2007, the Centre on Aging has administered the Graduate Specialization in Aging (GSA). The GSA allows graduate students to concentrate their studies in aging by taking two core courses in aging, completing a thesis or major project that is publically presented, and includes at least one of the Centre’s Research Affiliate’s to sit on the committee*.

The first GSA recipient was in 2009. As aging issues become more prevalent, the number of students interested in the Specialization has increased each year. This past fall, four students received their GSA certificate from the Centre. Congratulations to all of the recipients!

For more information on the GSA, visit umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/students/582.

*Research Affiliates are identified below



Althea Ambosta

Age-related changes in the use of visual cues for reorientation

Master of Arts
Department of Psychology,
Faculty of Arts

Advisor: Dr. Debbie Kelly



Jennifer McArthur

Social engagement as a predictor of health services use in baby-boomers and older adults

Master of Science,
Department of Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine

Advisor: Dr. Verena Menec;
Committee members: Dr. Malcolm Doupe, Dr. Daniel Bailis, and Dr. Shahin Shooshtari



Karla Reichert

An evaluation of the Winnipeg-based Alzheimer Society caregiver support groups

Master of Public Administration,
Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Arts

Committee member: Dr. Verena Menec



Alesa Sutherland

An ethnography of robotic cat therapy in a Manitoba care home

Master of Arts,
Department of Anthropology , Faculty of Arts

Committee member: Dr. Lorna Guse