

CENTRE ON AGING NEWS

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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.

Acting Director: Dr. Daniel Sitar

Professor Emeritus, College of Medicine

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

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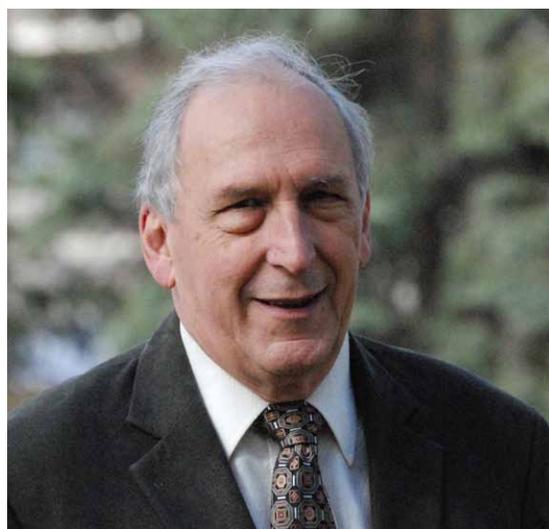
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Message from the Acting Director

Although early in my tenure as Acting Director of the Centre, several initiatives have been undertaken.

At the University of Manitoba, a Search Committee has been established, and the position for the next Director of the Centre on Aging has been advertised. Organization of our research seminar series by Research Affiliates has been completed and reflects the wide variety of subjects that are currently being pursued by our members. The Spring Symposium Committee has been established and the theme has been chosen for our 2015 meeting. It is entitled "The Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging—What's in it for me?" The Committee will consider content for the Symposium that is scheduled for May 4–5, 2015. The Centre is fortunate to have the Co-Principal Investigator of this longitudinal study, Dr. Parminder Raina from McMaster University, as a featured participant.



Centre on Aging Acting Director, Dr. Daniel Sitar

With respect to national initiatives, the renewal application for funding of the Canadian Longitudinal study on Aging has been submitted, and we are awaiting its adjudication. Dr. Enrique Fernandez was successful in his application to be recognized as an official Research Cluster by the Institute of Humanities, and the Centre on Aging is a recognized component of the Conceptualizing and Experiencing Aging before Modernity cluster. I have provided a letter of support indicating our willingness to be part of a federally funded Networks of Centres of Excellence application entitled AGE-WELL that is being spearheaded by the University of Toronto. This was only one of ten proposals out of a total of 83 submissions that were advanced to a full application. The application is currently under review.

With respect to maintaining and enhancing our visibility, I will be attending the Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG) meetings in October in Niagara Falls, and I will be meeting with appropriate persons and organizations.

Message from the Acting Director continued on page 2 ...

Upcoming events

Research Seminar Series

November 4, 2014 | 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Dr. Michelle Porter

More Candrive—An update on this longitudinal study of older drivers in Canada

238 Investors Group Athletic Centre

December 3, 2014 | 12:00–1:00 pm

Kelly Cranswick

Manitoba Research Data Centre: A wealth of information

TBA

January 7, 2015 | 12:00–1:00 pm

Dr. Danielle Bouchard

How can we get older adults to reach the national physical activity guidelines?

238 Investors Group Athletic Centre

February 3, 2015 | 12:00–1:00 pm

Dr. Robert Tate

The Manitoba Follow-up Study

405 Brodie Centre, Bannatyne Campus

March 4, 2015 | 12:00–1:00 pm

Dr. Jonathan Marotta

Posterior cortical atrophy: Insights into perception and action

535 Drake Centre, Fort Garry Campus

Spring Research Symposium

May 4–5, 2015

Bannatyne Campus

For updated information, visit: umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/events/384

Award application deadlines

November 14, 2014

Centre on Aging Research Fellowship award applications due (*open to tenure track/tenured University of Manitoba faculty only*)

March 20, 2015

Centre on Aging student award applications due

Message from the Acting Director continued from page 1 ...

The centre will have an exhibit at CAG to showcase our research, events, affiliates, publications, and the Graduate Specialization in Aging. In November, I will be attending the Gerontological Society of America Meetings in Washington, DC, and chairing a paper session on Acute Care.

In closing, I am grateful to the staff of the Centre on Aging for their guidance in completing my responsibilities, and especially to Verena Menec, for her wisdom and availability to provide me with insight into strategies for moving the Centre forward during this period of transition.

—Dr. Daniel Sitar

Graduate Specialization in Aging

Congratulations to the three students who have successfully completed their studies and have met the requirements to receive their Graduate Specialization in Aging certificate.

- Catherine Marshall (Department of Human Nutritional Sciences) completed her requirements for her Master of Science in June 2014. Her thesis is entitled *Body dissatisfaction, concerns about aging, and food choices of baby boomer and older women in Manitoba*. Research Affiliate, Dr. Christina Lengyel was her advisor.
- Michelle Di Antonio, received her Master of Social Work in October 2014. Michelle completed her advanced field practice under Research Affiliate, Dr. Tuula Heinonen.
- Angela Gentile, also received her Master of Social Work in October 2014, by completing the advanced field practice under Research Affiliate, Dr. Donald Fuchs.

Spotlight on research: Research affiliate profiles



Editor's note: During the summer of 2014, the Centre on Aging had a student volunteer interview several Affiliates and write about their research. These articles will appear in the newsletter's next issue.

Arman Iranpour started Grade 12 in September 2014 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. Over the summer, Arman interviewed Centre on Aging research affiliates about their research interests.

Dr. Laura Funk

Dr. Laura Funk is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. She received her MA, Ph.D., and Post-Doc from the University of Victoria in BC. Dr. Funk currently does research which focuses on care for older persons, alongside teaching a variety of Sociology courses. Her current research projects include: an establishment grant from the Manitoba Health Research Council, in which she studies how policies influence family caregiving; a project at the Riverview Health Centre, in which she is examining the emotional work done by care staff; and a Centre on Aging funded project, in which she examines the roles and responsibilities of volunteer and paid companions for older persons in care homes. She is also working on writing a book on the Sociology of Aging, when she is not conducting research or teaching at the University.

When asked why she feels her work is important, Dr. Funk said that families are often viewed primarily as a resource for the care of older persons, when in fact "we need to understand how to provide care for older people, while paying attention to the people providing it." She said that this includes focusing on how policies affect care providers.

Dr. Funk said that completing a diploma in Gerontology at Simon Fraser University, as well as her sociological training, sparked her interest in the field. Her passion for sociology and the need for change in the care-giving system motivate her to continue the research she is doing. Dr. Funk hopes to effectively change practice and policy around care-giving and raise awareness for the work that care-providers do.

Research participants needed

Dr. Funk is currently seeking Winnipeg participants for her Manitoba Health Research Council funded research project on caregiving.

- Are you currently providing care to a family member who is 65 years of age or older?
- Do you provide at least 10 hours a week of support?
- Are you currently employed?

She is interested in learning about how policies, organizations and health care systems influence your experiences.

Your responses will provide important information about caregivers' experiences navigating through health and support systems as well as balancing work and caregiving. Because we are seeking to create an overall picture of caregivers, we will also ask a few demographic questions.

Your participation would involve you being interviewed in-person (approx. 1.5 hours per interview) by a trained research interviewer, at a time and quiet location convenient for you. Because we would like to examine changes over time in your experience, we would like to conduct two additional follow-up interviews over the course of two years.

Involvement is voluntary and steps will be taken to safeguard the confidentiality of your personal information. If you would like to participate or learn more, contact Dr. Funk:

Laura.Funk@ad.umanitoba.ca or 204-474-6678.

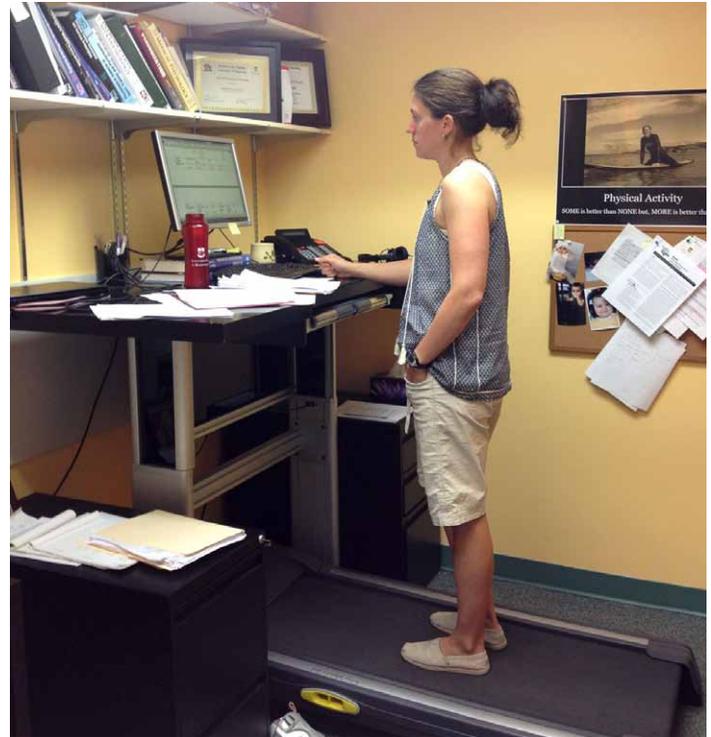
This study is approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba.

Dr. Danielle Bouchard

Dr. Danielle Bouchard is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management at the University of Manitoba. She received her Ph.D. from the School of Kinesiology at the Université de Sherbrooke in 2008. Along with teaching in the Faculty, she conducts extensive research in the field of physical activity mostly with older adults, which covers a variety of topics with defined objectives. Currently, Dr. Bouchard is focusing on studying how to increase the number of older Canadians effectively meeting the physical activity guidelines, on decreasing the rate of inactivity, and exploring how duration of obesity affect the ability to change one's lifestyle and observe positive health outcomes. When asked how she got into this area of research, Dr. Bouchard said that initially she wanted to do research regarding child obesity; however, her supervisor worked with older adults and encouraged her to do the same. She soon realized that older adults were available and fun to work with, and there was a much greater need than expected for research to be done in her field.

Around 60% of Canadians believe they are meeting the national activity standards, whereas about 15% really are when we measure it objectively. This proportion is even lower in older adults. These guidelines are recommending a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-to vigorous intensity aerobic exercises weekly plus two days of resistance training. She believes this is a result of a couple of different factors: Canadians are not aware of the guidelines; Canadians do not know what "moderate to vigorous intensity" really means; and/or Canadians don't have access to facilities that would allow them do to resistance training. Her current work aims to answer the question "What is moderate intensity and how to measure it?" Dr. Bouchard and her team are developing interventions to help older people understand the guidelines, in hopes of increasing the number of them meeting the activity guidelines. One way they are currently addressing this is to get older people to use a tool that tells them when they are walking fast enough to reach moderate intensity.

Not only is Dr. Bouchard working to get people to be more active, she is also exploring ways to help people be less sedentary, or in other words, sit less. The scary thing is that, according to the literature, even if one is active, if sitting more than six hours, the risk of chronic diseases is increasing. One way to tackle that problem is the use of a treadmill workstation, which Dr. Bouchard



uses herself. A treadmill workstation consists of a work desk attached on top of a treadmill, which allows one to walk, while they work at the office. She is currently studying the benefits of these treadmill workstations in different work settings.

Another area of research that Dr. Bouchard is exploring is how obesity duration can impact how an older obese adult responds to a lifestyle modification program. Lifestyle modification is the recommended treatment for 33.5% of Canada's older adults who are obese. Even if older adults were to change their lifestyles, only a small proportion of them have long-term success in aiming to reducing body weight, improving metabolic health (e.g. cholesterol level), or increasing functional capacity (e.g., balance). The period an individual has been obese (obesity duration) might explain, in part, the success of lifestyle modification.

When asked why she feels her work is important to the public, Dr. Bouchard said "the prevalence of obesity has really increased recently in all age groups" and that "current strategies to get people to be regularly active and live a healthy lifestyle aren't working effectively". In addition, she added, "sadly, many people aren't aware of the great advantages of being active regardless of one's body weight". Dr. Bouchard said that seeing how her work makes a difference in someone's life motivates her to continue her research and she hopes she can expand her impact to a greater number of people.

Research Affiliate updates

Funding awards

Dr. Genevieve Thompson and **Dr. Laura Funk**, and their colleagues received a Canadian Institute of Health Research Grant for the project entitled: *Excellence in delivering person-centered intimate care: What makes the difference* (\$519,912).

Dr. Jo-Ann Sawatzky is a member of two research teams that received a Canadian Institute of Health Research Grant for the project entitled: *Diversifying our ways of understanding heart health among First Nations people in Manitoba: A mixed methods study governed by a two-eyed seeing approach* (\$709,987) and *The PREHAB Study—Pre-operative rehabilitation for reduction of hospitalization after coronary bypass and valvular surgery* (\$619,784).

Media

Dr. Benedict Albeni was interviewed on the Charles Adler Show on CJOB 680, where the program was focused on Reconstructing Memories on September 3, 2014. This topic was in association with the publication of several recent papers on creating false memories in mice by the MIT professor, Dr. Susumu Tonegawa.

Dr. Albeni was also invited to take on the position of Associate Editor for the journal *Brain Injury*, which is the official journal for the International Brain Injury Association.

Making the most of mealtimes (M3): Determinants of food intake in long-term care

By Dr. Christina Lengyel

Dr. Christina Lengyel, Associate Professor, Department of Human Nutritional Sciences, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, is a Co-Principal Investigator and the Manitoba Lead on a diverse, interprofessional and inter-provincial research team [H. Keller (Principal Investigator, University of Waterloo), C. Steele, L. Duizer, S. Slaughter, and N. Carrier] across Canada who have recently been funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (\$978,930 for two years) to investigate the key factors that affect food and fluid intake in long-term care. Data collection will begin January 2015.

Malnutrition is common among older adults living in long term care (LTC) homes. Influencing every system of the body, malnutrition has serious consequences both for older adults residing in LTC and the health care system overall. As poor food and fluid intake are considered the primary cause of malnutrition, interventions to prevent and treat malnutrition are possible. To date, most of the research conducted in Canada and worldwide has focused on describing food intake and the prevalence of malnutrition without thoroughly considering potential reasons for poor food intake.

Making the Most of Mealtimes (M3) is a program of research that proposes the key modifiable determinants of food and fluid intake fall into three categories: Meal Quality (nutritious, appealing food); Mealtime Experience (eating environment); and Meal Access (dentition, dysphagia, eating ability). Determining which of these factors are most important is the purpose of M3. By finding the most influential factors, they can be targeted in future interventions to improve food intake and ultimately quality of life for residents.

Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, and New Brunswick are participating in M3, including 640 residents across 32 homes. Data collection will involve predominately chart review, observation and physical examination (e.g., anthropometry, oral health exam). Mealtime observations will be used to estimate food intake in addition to weighing food before and after a meal. Eating behaviours and how the staff interact with residents at meals will also be assessed. Staff will be invited to complete a short questionnaire to determine their perceptions of care and barriers to care.

Making the most of mealtimes continued on page 6...

Student research activities

Older adults' perceptions of alcohol and prescription drug use in older adulthood

By Megan Ferguson

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore the underdeveloped area of research related to substance use in older adulthood by understanding the issues of substance related disorders in older adulthood. Forty-six older adults, who were 65 years of age or older living in assisted living facilities, or members of senior groups (i.e., MenSheds Manitoba) participated in the study.

In the quantitative phase of the study, participants completed a questionnaire about their perceptions of problematic alcohol or prescription drug use and the qualitative phase of the study was used to further explain the basic results of the first, quantitative phase. Sixty-five percent (n=30) of individuals indicated that one to two alcoholic beverages in a day were acceptable and 74% (n=34) of individuals reported that the amount of prescription or over-the-counter medications that is acceptable is due to what a doctor prescribes. Additionally, 94% (n=43) of participants indicated that they believed that use of prescription drugs or over-the-counter medication can become problematic.

Presently, there is more understanding of what factors may have contributed to individuals with substance use disorders such as isolation, depression, loneliness or age-related changes for older adults. Thus, with this change in how stigma is associated to older adults

with substance use disorders, society is not as quick to castigate an individual who may be dealing with a substance use disorder and has more education on the programs and supports that these individuals have access to.

With this data, it is evident that preventative strategies should be developed in order to bring about more efficient outcomes and better quality of care of older adults who may be experiencing problems with substance use. The results are also significant for healthcare and mental health practitioners to be informed and aware as they respond to the increasing treatment needs of older adults. Therefore, the clinical and preventative significance of this study can also formulate strategic efforts to increase training, research and lobbying efforts to expand access to healthcare resources pertinent to substance use in older adulthood.

Megan Ferguson is an undergraduate student in the Faculty of Social Work, and is also completing the Option in Aging at the University of Manitoba. She won the Undergraduate Research Award this past summer and was mentored by Dr. Donald Fuchs, Professor, Faculty of Social Work; and Dr. Elaine Mordoch, Associate Professor, College of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, in completing research on *older adults' perceptions of alcohol and prescription drug use in older adulthood*. Megan is committed to conducting research in this area and raising awareness and educating the general public on substance use in older adulthood, which is a highly overlooked issue.

Making the most of mealtimes continued from page 5...

The dining areas will be observed to determine the physical and psychosocial environment. A questionnaire will be completed by key management personnel to better understand key aspects of the home. Menus will be analysed for their nutritional content.

Without this comprehensive understanding of food intake and what factors most affect it, interventions will be ineffective and malnutrition in LTC will continue to be widespread. The results of this project will be used to develop targeted interventions, and also to advocate with decision makers and educate practitioners to improve mealtime processes and nutrition management within Canadian LTC homes.

An international perspective on ageing

By Sheila Novek

This past August, I had the experience of a lifetime attending the International Summer School on Ageing (ISSA) at Lund University in Sweden. The one-week program brought together 20 PhD students and post-doctoral fellows from around the world, and provided training in priority content areas, methodological issues as well as mentorship and networking opportunities.

The ISSA program is a joint scientific collaboration amongst Lund University (Sweden), the Swedish National Graduate School for Competitive Science on Ageing and Health, the National Institute of Health and Science on Aging–INRCA (Italy), and the University of British Columbia (Canada).

We participated in courses and workshops taught by professors from Sweden, Italy, Germany, and Canada (Dr. Anne Martin Matthews, University of British Columbia). The courses covered a range of topics including social and economic research on aging; environment and health; dementia; and careers in aging. The program provided me with the opportunity to get feedback on my own dissertation from two experts in my field and my fellow students, whose suggestions I have already incorporated into my PhD proposal.

It was so inspiring to meet other students who are passionate about aging research and working on innovative projects in different countries. I got to know students from Sweden, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Israel, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Russia, Finland, Lithuania, and Poland, just to name a few. We discussed our research projects, and learned about aging issues in different cultural and economic contexts.

Of course, I also had a great time outside of the classroom. Lund is a picturesque university town in southern Sweden, close to the sea. I explored the city with my fellow students, and enjoyed delicious Swedish cuisine. On the last day of the program it was really hard to say goodbye, but I know that the friendships and ideas for collaboration will carry forward. The participants and mentors have connected on Facebook, and we are already making plans to reunite at future conferences.

Sheila Novek is a second year PhD student in the Department of Community Health Sciences, College of Medicine, University of Manitoba. She is the 2014–2015 recipient of the Barbara Jean Payne Memorial Award in Social Gerontology, offered through the Centre on Aging.



Group photo of the ISSA professors, PhD students, and Post Doctoral fellows

Taken in Lund, Sweden, August 2014

Photo provided and used with permission of the International Summer School on Ageing

New research cluster: Aging before modernity

The newly formed research cluster, *Conceptualizing and experiencing aging before modernity*, intends to create an interdisciplinary forum for the exchange of ideas about how the physiological reality of aging was envisioned before modern times.

Approved by the Institute for the Humanities and supported by the Centre on Aging, this research cluster is looking to bring together members of the pre-existing "Group for Pre-modern Studies", Centre Research Affiliates, and students with an interest in aging over the next year. Dr. Enrique Fernandez, Professor, Department of French, Spanish, and Italian is the liaison for the research cluster.

As the current world's aging population projection is set to increase, nearly half of those born in 1900 died before the age of 50. The majority of the academic aging journals focus on the history of aging within the last 30 years to the current date. Yet there is a growing interest in examining how people aged in the past along with studying how the constructions of gender affected aging in different historical periods. For this purpose, the traditional methods of history and literary studies are especially relevant.¹

The research cluster held its first meeting on September 23, 2014. The meeting drew an interesting mix of researchers in aging and the humanities. During the meeting, the role of the older adult (aged 40 years and up) was discussed in comparing the modern day period and past centuries. Drawing upon some literary examples, such as Geoffrey Chaucer and *Don Quixote*, the older adult's life was typically reflected through the life of the upper class as they were perceived to have power and wealth. Additionally, the literature portrayed older men in the role of advisor or the "foolish" old man, while older women had no role or were portrayed disparagingly.

The cluster will continue to meet over the upcoming year, and future meetings will include individual presentations by members and to the public.

¹ Overview of the cluster: umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/humanities/rclusters/3640

Centre on Aging updates

Thank you to **Dr. Frances Racher**, Brandon University, who completed her two terms on the Centre's Advisory Board.

Associate Director, **Jim Hamilton** was invited to New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to talk about age-friendliness and was profiled by local media:

- MacLean, C. (2014, September 5). Expert on age-friendly cities visiting Summerside for talk. *The Journal Pioneer*. Retrieved from bit.ly/Zurim8
- MacLean, C. (2014, September 10). Summerside gets advice on becoming age-friendly. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from bit.ly/1rlvfV6

Now accepting Research Fellowship applications

The Centre on Aging Research Fellowship is designed to support aging-related research in any discipline. The Research Fellowship is open to all University of Manitoba faculty members. The value of the Research Fellowship increased from **\$10,000 to \$11,000 in September 2014** and is tenable for the 2015–2016 academic year.

Highest priority for funding will be given to

- new researchers who do not yet have stable funding for their research; and
- established researchers for whom aging-related research represents a new research direction.

To apply for the fellowship, University faculty should [review the award guidelines](#) for the award and download the application form on the Centre's Web site: umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/faculty_opportunities/fellowships. Applicants should complete and submit four hard copies of their application and supporting documents by **November 14, 2014, 4:30 pm** to

Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba
338 Isbister Building
Winnipeg MB R3T 2N2

Applicants will be contacted in December and notified of the committee's decision.