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WELCOME

To the Summer 2022 edition of the Geriatric Health System Research Group (GHS) Bulletin

In this this edition, you will find some recent events and accomplishments of the GHS Group, as well as updates on ongoing projects.

For more frequent updates on our work, follow us on Twitter @GHS_UW or like the Geriatric Health Systems Research Group - UW Facebook page.

We hope you enjoy!

Meet a GHS Student



Karen El Hajj
PhD Candidate

1. What has been the most rewarding aspect of graduate studies so far?

I have had many rewarding experiences throughout my current graduate studies. Some of the main ones include the ability to explore new ideas and develop my skills as an interdisciplinary researcher. Additionally, coming from an economics background, it was challenging but exciting to be introduced to new topics, concepts and diverse research methods that are used in Public Health. Finally, an important aspect of my graduate studies has been belonging to a supportive and collaborative research team.

2. How have you navigated any challenges along the way?

Like many other PhD students, I have faced several challenges over the past few years; a way to navigate my challenges has been having a supportive environment here at Waterloo. Part of my support system includes my supervisor, colleagues, team members, mentors, and professors in the School of Public Health Sciences. Each person has helped me in different ways to navigate and grow as a researcher and learn new skills along the way.

3. What are you most looking forward to as you continue your graduate training?

In general, I am looking forward to several goals while completing my program. I am looking forward to continuing to work on my thesis project and being able to publish research that contributes to Canada's long-term care system and its labour markets. I also look forward to expanding my network of mentors and colleagues for future collaborative projects.



Meet a GHS Partner

Jessica Bondy

Jessica Bondy is a partner of GHS as a Co-Investigator on our CIHR-funded research project “When Crisis Meets Opportunity: Responding to COVID-19 with integrative health and sheltering models for persons experiencing homelessness” (2021-2022). In this project, Jessica will share her relevant experience working alongside community partners to address issues around housing and homelessness in the community.

Jessica is the Director of Housing Services at House of Friendship in Kitchener. More recently, she has been a leader in implementing ShelterCare in Kitchener-Waterloo, an integrative health and sheltering model offering 24/7 supports for men experiencing homelessness. Jessica has a range of experience working on interdisciplinary teams in different settings, both in the not-for-profit sector and higher education space. Before starting her role with House of Friendship, Jessica worked in student housing and student services at the University of Waterloo (2011-2018). Jessica also sits on the Affordable Housing Strategy Committee for the City of Kitchener, the Homeless Umbrella Group in Waterloo Region, and volunteers with the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce. In recognition of her innovation and leadership, Jessica was the recipient of the Faculty of Health 2020 Alumni Achievement Award. We are looking forward to working with and learning from Jessica!



**Canadian
Frailty
Network**

**Réseau canadien
des soins aux
personnes fragilisées**

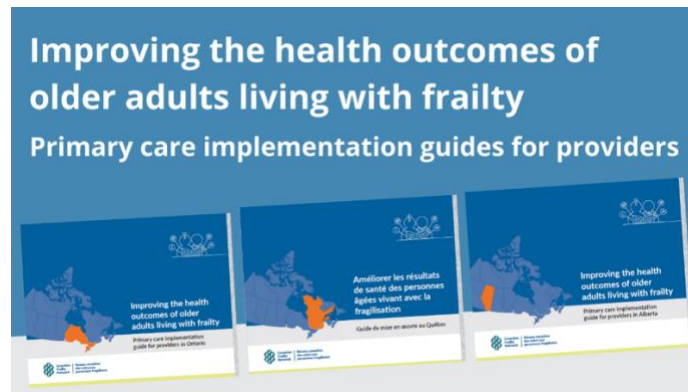
Transforming primary care for older Canadians living with frailty

Grant Wrap up and Next Steps

During the past year, members of the project team partnered with communications specialists to develop resources that shared key learnings and reflections from their implementation work in team-based primary care sites. Through our Transformative Grant funded by the Canadian Frailty Network (CFN), we created an approach to assist primary care providers in Ontario, Alberta, and Quebec to care for older patients (70+). This approach, which includes a variety of tools, was based on prior research, and was co-developed with primary care providers, patients, and caregivers. The model includes identifying older adults who are at risk of frailty or living in its early stages using screening and assessment tools; care planning through patient and caregiver engagement and shared decision-making; and care coordination and system navigation.

Province-specific guides were created to help primary care clinics and providers implement the tools in their own settings. These implementation guides, along with other resources to support primary care planning and implementation can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.cfn-nce.ca/research/our-research/our-portfolio-by-grant-type-or-competition/2015-transformative-grant-program/transforming-primary-care-for-older-canadians-living-with-frailty/>



To learn more about our CFN funded study, we also invite you to watch a webinar led by members of the project team: <https://www.cfn-nce.ca/webinar/transforming-primary-healthcare-for-older-canadians-living-with-frailty/>

Stay tuned over the next few months as we continue to share highlights and learnings from our project on **Twitter @GHS_UW!**

Au cours de l'année dernière, les membres de l'équipe du projet se sont associés à des spécialistes des communications pour mettre au point des ressources permettant d'échanger les principaux points à retenir et les réflexions sur leur travail de mise en œuvre sur des sites de soins primaires en équipe. Grâce à notre subvention de transformation financée par le Canadian Frailty Network (CFN), nous avons mis au point une approche permettant d'aider les fournisseurs de soins primaires de l'Ontario, de l'Alberta et du Québec à prendre soin des patients âgés (70 ans et plus). Cette approche, qui comprend une grande panoplie d'outils, se fonde sur des recherches antérieures et a été développée avec des fournisseurs de soins primaires, des patients et des soignants. Le modèle comprend l'identification des aînés qui sont exposés à un risque de fragilité (ou au premier stade) à l'aide :

- d'outils de dépistage et d'évaluation;
- de la planification des soins et de la prise de décision partagée concrétisée par la participation des patients et des proches aidants; et
- de la coordination des soins et l'orientation dans le système.

Des guides propres à chaque province ont été créés pour aider les cliniques et les fournisseurs de soins primaires à mettre en œuvre les outils dans leur propre milieu. Vous pouvez y accéder, ainsi qu'à d'autres ressources visant à soutenir la planification et la mise en œuvre des soins primaires en cliquant sur le lien suivant :

Pour en savoir plus sur notre étude financée par le CFN, nous vous invitons également à regarder un webinaire animé par des membres de l'équipe du projet : <https://www.cfn-nce.ca/webinar/transforming-primary-healthcare-for-older-canadians-vivre-avec-la-fragilite/>

Restez à l'affût au cours des mois qui suivent : nous continuons à partager les faits saillants et les enseignements de notre projet sur **Twitter @GHS_UW!**

The Sharp Living Library

An Online Event



In honour of intergenerational day on June 1st of 2022, GHS hosted a living library event where students had an opportunity to meet and have meaningful conversations with SHARP members over Zoom. Many of our SHARP members were gracious enough to act as “books” for the living library and shared their stories and experiences. Students were the “readers” of these books. They had the opportunity to ask questions and challenge their stereotypes about older adults by engaging in an open conversation with someone that they would have never otherwise met! Here are some comments that we received from students and SHARP members who participated in the event:

“I thought this event was great - I've already been telling all my peers about it! Thank you so much for all the work that went into this event.”

“This kind of interaction of 'bridge-building' relationships with young people will definitely bring both sides together.”

“This really reinforced how much I want to work with older adults. I learnt how vibrant and capable some of the SHARP members are, which has really made me check my assumptions of the people that I want to work with.”

The Seniors Helping as Research Partners (SHARP) group is an engaged group of older adults and caregivers who are interested in partnering with health researchers in a wide variety of ways. Our goal is to learn from seniors and their families, to develop a sustainable network, and to advance the development of research priorities and collaborations with the ultimate objective of improving the health care system for older adults.

For an update on some of our recent work, please see the recorded team presentations at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hfna6078SU>

If you are **65+** and interested in more information or volunteering with the SHARP network, please visit our website at www.uwaterloo.ca/ghs/sharp or contact **Alexandra Whate**
Email: alexandra.whate@uwaterloo.ca

Current Projects

CIHR Project Grant: Developing strategies and resources to support patient and family engagement with racialized immigrant older adults

Awarded in February 2021, the objectives of this 3-year project are: 1) to describe how racialized immigrant older adults currently engage as partners in their own care from the perspectives of three groups (racialized immigrant older adults, family members, and health care providers); and 2) to co-design linguistically- and culturally-appropriate tools to support the engagement of racialized immigrant older adults in managing their care.

This work is being led by Dr. Catherine Tong and Diya Chowdhury, PhD student, along with an amazing team of interpreters and multilingual students. Over the past year, they have conducted 62 (and counting) interviews with racialized older adults and caregivers in Southern Ontario, in eight languages (Arabic, Bangla, Hindi, English, Mandarin, Punjabi, Tamil, Urdu).

In Fall 2022 we will be interviewing health care providers. In 2023, we will use what we heard in the interviews to inform co-design sessions with racialized older adults, health care providers and community partners to develop tools for improved engagement with these populations.

When crisis meets opportunity: Responding to COVID-19 with integrative health and sheltering models for persons experiencing homelessness

GHS members and researchers from Lawson Research Institute were awarded CIHR funding in December 2021 in support of their project looking at integrative health and shelter care models developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Led by Drs. Jacobi Elliott and Cheryl Forchuk, this works aims to: 1) understand how programs were developed and implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic; b) determine what resources and partnerships are needed for implementation and sustainability; and c) explore how integrative health and sheltering approaches can be scaled to other regions, through advocacy and policy efforts.

Currently, members of the research team are interviewing program staff and frontline providers to understand how the programs were developed and implemented. The group will continue to share updates in future Bulletins.

Integrated knowledge translation: Understanding the implementation process of a model of integrated care for older adults

Co-Led by Drs. Jacobi Elliott and Paul Stolee, this one-year CIHR-funded grant aims to understand the knowledge to action (KTA) processes in which knowledge is co-created within a co-design setting involving patients and implementation stakeholders, and then implemented within a complex health system to improve integrated care for older adults living with frailty.

Working in close partnership with St. Joseph's Health Care London and the Southwest Frail Senior Strategy, we are studying real-time efforts to improve the health care system for frail older patients. Data collection, including observations, interviews, and surveys at three sites, is nearing completion.

Exploring the care needs of Canadians living with frailty and the role of primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic

This project, led by Drs. Paul Stolee, Sara Mallinson, Anik Giguère, Joanie Sims-Gould, and Kenneth Rockwood, is investigating the health care experiences of Canadians (who are living with, or at risk of frailty) through the voices and experiences of older adults, caregivers, and their health care providers and administrators. We are also capturing policy changes and commentary at the national, provincial, and local level to better understand the rapidly evolving health system responses to the pandemic. Approximately 50 primary care providers, patients, and caregivers across three provinces were interviewed as part of this study. Presently, data collection and analysis have been completed.

Why aren't we engaging our most at-risk older patients? Developing an in-depth understanding of patient/family engagement across care transitions

Co-led by Drs. Paul Stolee, Jacobi Elliott, and Paula van Wyk, this three-year CIHR funded study aims to develop an in-depth understanding of patient and family engagement across care transitions to determine what engagement practices facilitate or hinder patient and family engagement during care transitions. The study team hopes to learn what resources and materials are needed to support engagement in care transitions and how those resources can best be implemented to enhance engagement practices. The study will be conducted in two phases, the first of which involves interviews with patients and their caregivers following a care transition during their care (this phase currently underway), and the latter which includes workshops comprised of patients, caregivers, and health care providers, to review the findings from phase one and develop resources for implementation. The study team hopes the results will enable better engagement practices to be implemented in order to reduce adverse outcomes associated with care transitions.

Eco-designing, testing, and distributing a tool to support older adults accessing virtual care

Over the past year, we designed, revised, and tested a one-page virtual care tool to support older adults in preparing for and navigating virtual appointments. We collaborated with SHARP members in focus groups to co-design the tool and asked older participants who were not involved in its development to test it and offer feedback. Distribution efforts are continuous and focus on making the tool accessible to older adults who are less comfortable with technology.

New Grants

Canadian Institutes of Health Research - December 1, 2021, to November 30, 2023:

- When Crisis Meets Opportunity: Responding to COVID-19 with integrative health and sheltering models for persons experiencing homelessness. **Elliott, J.**, Forchuk, C., Hiebert, B., **Sacco, V.**, **Stolee, P.**, **Tong, C. E.**, **Whate, A.**

Canadian Institute of Actuaries - January 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022:

- Direction of Long-Term Care in Canada. Curtis, L., **Andrews, D.**, **El-Hajj, K.**, **Stolee, P.**

Looking Back – Conference Presentations

Together We Care 2022 Convention:

- Conklin, J., Mohammadi, M., Archibald, D., **Elliott, J.**, Hsu, A., Kothari, A., **Stolee, P.**, & Sveistrup, H. (April, 2022). Transforming Care: Building Resilience and Support through Family Caregivers. Together We Care virtual conference, Canada's largest long-term care and retirement communities convention. (Virtual).

Allied for Inclusivity in Long-Term Care: A Forum for Building Connections:

- **Tseng, N.** & **Tong, C. E.** (April, 2022). Cultural competency interventions in LTC: A scoping review. (Poster Presentation, Virtual)
- **Tong, C. E.** & Arya, N. (April, 2022). How do South Asian seniors perceive their long-term care needs? (Oral Presentation, Virtual)

British Society of Gerontology's annual conference:

- **Tong, C. E.**, **Chowdhury, D.** & **Stolee, P.** (July, 2022). Transnational experiences of widowhood and the hybridization of culturally informed widowhood practices: A case study of Bengali widows in Ontario, Canada. (Poster Presentation, Virtual).

International Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International:

- Sivananthan, S., **Whate, A.**, **Elliott, J.**, Apostolides, H., **Stolee, P.** (June, 2022) The Development of a National Evaluation Framework for the First Link[®] Program Across Canada. (Poster Presentation, Virtual).

Recent Publications

- Chowdhury, D., Baiocco-Romano, L., Sacco, V., El Hajj, K., & Stolee, P.** (2022). Cultural competence interventions for health care providers working with racialized foreign-born older adults: Protocol for a systematic review. *JMIR Research Protocols*, *11*(7), e31691. doi: 10.2196/31691
- McNeil, H., McMurray, J., Byrne, K., Grindrod, K., & **Stolee, P.** (2022). Engagement of older adults in regional health innovation: The ECOTECH concept mapping project. *Sage: Open Medicine*, *10*, 1-13. doi: 10.1177/205031212111073333
- Palubiski, L. M., Tulsieram, K. L., Archibald, D., Conklin, J., **Elliott, J.**, Hsu, A., **Stolee, P.**, Sveistrup, H., & Kothari, A. (2022). Guidance to (re) integrate caregivers as essential care partners into the LTC setting: A rapid review. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*, *23*(5), 778-809.e1. doi: 10.1016/j.jamda.2022.01.054