Greetings!

With great challenges come great opportunities. The opportunities are not simply to cope with the current pandemic challenge, but also to improve systems and approaches for the future. The current pandemic touches all involved in Parkwood Institute Research in significant but different ways. The groups of people that our research focuses on are the same groups of people who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

People who are seniors have been the most vulnerable to serious complications, including death. The epicentre of outbreaks in our province and country have been long-term care and congregate living settings. Why are seniors living in long-term care? While this is a huge question, beyond the scope of my brief message, a short answer relates to problems of cognition (thinking, memory) and mobility (so that people can no longer function at home). These are the two major foci of our aging programs that ultimately support people aging in place, at home, for as long as possible.

The shadow pandemic has been described as the increase in mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and suicide. Health care workers and other front line workers will likely have increased rates of post-traumatic stress syndrome. Mental health is the third research theme area of Parkwood Institute Research. Consider also as well as all of us being currently more vulnerable to mental health challenges, that people living with mental illness are also disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. People living with mental illness have twice the rate of poverty compared to the general population (Crawford, 2013). This means they have more food insecurity, more reliance on public transportation, insecure housing, and may not have access to solutions others enjoy such as on-line access to services and delivery. This population is overrepresented in the homeless population (Forchuk, Csiernik, & Jensen, 2011) and other forms of congregate living such as group homes.

Many solutions that have been studied at Parkwood for some time, such as virtual care, are now seen as essential and are being quickly adopted. Our research workforce has found that for many of our projects we can also safely implement our protocols virtually with phone and/or computer support. This will impact how we do research in the future. We have the opportunity at the end of the pandemic to have more virtual care to increase access to vulnerable groups as well as the population as a whole, and a greater spotlight and appreciation of issues related to aging and mental health.

We have had some good news in recent weeks with rates of new COVID-19 peaking and slowly declining. We see gradual and phased lifting of restrictions. Our hospital and research leaders are also cautiously planning
the phased resumption of activities. This will no doubt be a slow and measured process, but one that will keep Parkwood Institute staff, patients, and research participants safe as we move to our new normal.

As our province reopens (and as we gladly enjoy the beautiful spring weather), we must remain mindful of infection control measures such as handwashing and social distancing. Your continued patience and diligence are crucial to minimizing the spread of the virus.

As you will see from this newsletter, Parkwood Research Institute members have still been busy with a variety of initiatives, many of us working and meeting remotely. Don't forget that WebEx meetings are available to anyone within PIR. Just email PIR_info@sjhc.london.on.ca with the meeting details, and we can set up your virtual meeting.

Finally, a bittersweet goodbye to our PIR Administrative Assistant, Vanessa Cullen. Luckily, she will not be too far away, having accepted another position at Parkwood. We wish Vanessa all the best in her new role and thank her for all of her great work here at PIR!

Stay safe and well,
Cheryl Forchuk RN PhD O Ont FCAHS
Beryl and Richard Ivey Research Chair in Aging, Mental Health, Rehabilitation and Recovery

**COVID-19 RESEARCH & NEW FINDINGS**

**Moral Distress and Well-Being in Health Care Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The MacDonald Franklin Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Research Centre (located at Lawson Health Research Institute) is conducting an online longitudinal study using surveys to examine moral distress and well-being in health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moral distress is the psychological distress following an event that may conflict with deeply held personal moral values. The purpose of this research is to document moral distress at the personal, professional, and organizational-level for health care workers, impact on well-being, clinician-patient relationships, and overall health care delivery experiences in the wake of COVID-19. The research will provide valuable knowledge that can be used to provide guidance on the individual, professional, and organizational-level changes needed to optimize the well-being of health care workers and minimize moral distress in future crises similar to COVID-19.

The survey length will be adjusted based on personal availability. A short-form version of the first survey is available (approximately 10 minutes), with a longer option if respondents have the time (approximately 15-20 minutes). A longitudinal aspect of the survey (approximately 15 minutes) will occur at 3-month intervals (up to 18 months) to understand how changes throughout the pandemic may impact perceived moral distress. Responding to follow-up surveys is not mandatory.
Safety and Efficacy of Post-exposure Prophylaxis With Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) for the Prevention of COVID-19 in High-risk Older Individuals in Long-term and Specialized Care: A Double-blind Randomized Control Trial

Older adults are at the highest risk of complications and severe illness for 2019-nCoV infections. Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), an emerging chemoprophylaxis, which holds clinical and mechanistic plausibility, will help to reduce disease incidence and mitigate disease severity across in-patient settings.

This study is designed to assess the safety and efficacy of post-exposure prophylaxis with hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) for the prevention of Coronavirus Infectious Disease-19 (COVID-19) in high-risk older individuals in long-term and specialized care.

Modules for Enhancing Care (MECs): An innovation for bringing practice into research through implementation science

Over the past year the Research 2 Practice (R2P) team has been working collaboratively with the ABI and SCI rehabilitation programs to explore novel ways to increase physical activity participation and rehabilitation intensity in addition to the 1-1 model of therapy delivery that physical and occupational therapists typically employ. With the help of Western’s Clinical Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Science Practicum students working across different settings a variety of approaches for delivering therapies were piloted. Two specific approaches emerged:

1. Small group sessions involving 3-6 patients conducted by a clinical champion (typically a therapist or therapy assistant) and supported by an assistant (e.g., therapy assistant or student) that consisted of additional programming beyond the regular therapy time. Different sessions involved seated aerobics, machine-based equipment use, upper limb exercise programming, circuit training and adapted yoga.
2. More efficient delivery of innovative therapies such as robotic or FES-assisted devices (i.e., exoskeleton, FES stepping, body-weight supported treadmill, Lokomat, FES cycling for inpatients) was also achieved through a novel model that identified clinical champions for specific devices supported by a cluster of assistants (i.e., therapy assistants, other therapists, students).

Both approaches required an examination of implementation drivers (i.e., barriers, facilitators) that considered and put in place key surrounding infrastructure such as training, coaching, scheduling, referral and communication processes.

Key initiators of these innovations were the original clinical champion (Melissa Fielding, ABI Inpatient PT) as well as core R2P team members (Charlie Giurleo, Stephanie Cornell, Stephanie Marrocco, Patrick Stapleton, Deena Lala, Dalton Wolfe). In this case, the entire clinical ABI and SCI rehabilitation programs came together as a community of practice to further participate in the exploration of the viability of this innovative approach to improving care for the patients we serve. Rehabilitation leadership embraced this work and sponsored a series of in-services and meetings in January-March 2020 where these developments were shared across the rehabilitation program as well as with other SJHC programs.

The development of the MECs approach is notable in that it demonstrates the bi-directional nature of the relationship of research and practice. Although some of the individual therapies have been examined in traditional research studies, the innovation is reflected in the model of care which has been borne and piloted as a quality improvement exploration. This work will now be extended as the subject of a future practice-based research trial originally intended to be initiated over the last 3 months (to be resumed when appropriate with respect to COVID-related practice).
WELCOME TO OUR NEW RESEARCH PERSONNEL!

Dr. Jaspreet Bhangu joined the Division of Geriatric Medicine as Clinician Researcher in October 2019. He graduated from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in 2004 and completed his PhD in Trinity College Dublin in 2016. He further completed a clinical fellowship in stroke neurology with the University of Toronto in 2017. His research interests include cardiac disease in the elderly, syncope, falls, and frailty and he has been involved in human intervention research as a co-investigator in clinical trials looking at cardiac signals from implantable devices in aging cohorts. Welcome Dr. Bhangu.

Dr. Alishya Burrell is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Geriatric Medicine. She graduated from the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Windsor Campus in 2014. She completed her training in Internal Medicine and Geriatric Medicine at Western University. She is also completing her Master of Health Professions Education through the joint program from Maastricht University and the Centre for Education Research & Innovation at Western University. Her research interests are in geriatric competencies in the undergraduate medical education curriculum, ageism and the hidden curriculum. Welcome Dr. Burrell.

Gloria Lau is an undergraduate student at Western University studying Medical Sciences. With an interest in providing specialized care for individuals with physical and mental disabilities, she is drawn towards a career in health and rehabilitation. She will be working as a research student with Dr. Dalton Wolfe and the R2P team focusing on best practice implementation and self-management interventions through current initiatives such as the Ontario SCI EQCC Consortium, and PRIME. Gloria has always aimed to view situations with a broader perspective, and she hopes to encourage more people to look beyond the barriers in healthcare and be part of the initiative of encouraging patient-centered and equitable care. Welcome Gloria!
Jialu (Ella) Wang is a kinesiology student at Western University and will be starting her fourth year in September. She has been volunteering in the fitness gym since last fall and will be working with Dr. Wolfe and the R2P team focusing on the VIP4SCI self-management initiative. Upon graduation, Ella would like to go on to PT/OT school. Her interests include rehabilitation and mental control. Ella enjoys to workout and is learning about personal training in her free time. Welcome Ella!

Aaron Beunen is a second year student at Western University. Being a volunteer in a private Physiotherapy clinic last summer that focused on musculoskeletal rehabilitation, Aaron wanted to diversify and learn more about neurological and spinal cord rehabilitation. Upon completion of his undergraduate studies, Aaron is hoping to get into a school of Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy and fulfill his dream of becoming a Therapist. He has always been passionate about rehabilitation and being able to contribute to improving the lives of others. Welcome Aaron.

A VERY SPECIAL WELCOME TO YOU ALL!

CONGRATULATIONS ON THESE NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS...

Dr. Dalton Wolfe, Nomination for Scientist of the Year - 2020 Lawson Impact Awards.
Stephanie Marrocco, winner of the Leadership Award for Fellows & Students – 2020 Lawson Impact Awards.

Stephanie Cullen, Master's Student at the Gait and Brain Lab, has been accepted for Medical School at Western University and Queens University.

Bhagyashree Sharma, Research Assistant at the Gait and Brain Lab, has been accepted for Medical School at University of Toronto.

Josh Titus, Master's Student at the Gait and Brain Lab, has been accepted for Occupational Therapy at University of Toronto.

Dr. Cheryl Forchuk, Innovation Award - 2020 Lawson Impact Awards.
**GRANTS & RESEARCH FUNDING**

**Principle Investigators:** Dr. Bob Teasell  
**Study Title:** Increasing access to community-based task-oriented exercise programs through healthcare-recreation partnerships to improve function for people with balance and mobility limitations: A multi-site randomized controlled trial.  
**Funding Agency:** CIHR  
**Year:** 2019-2023  
**Amount:** $761,176

**JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS**


**BOOK PUBLICATIONS**


The 19th edition of the SREBR has been completed. It includes all randomized controlled trials on stroke rehabilitation up to July 1, 2018. It is the most comprehensive research synthesis of stroke rehabilitation in the world.


In addition to the SREBR, the CORRE team has created a Stroke Rehabilitation Guidebook:


A major section of SCIRE is the Outcome Measures that clinicians use to gauge the recoveries of their SCI patients. SCIRE 7.0 also includes 130 Outcome Measures specifically validated for people with SCI. All OMs are up to date as of March 31, 2020 and the new Clinician Summaries and Research Summaries are currently being uploaded.

Current Edition:

The CORRE team also has the ERABI Clinical Guidebook available on their website: https://erabi.ca/guidebook/

**Book Chapters**


**PUBLISHED ABSTRACTS**


**PRESENTATIONS**


SAVE THE DATE

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

for

Mental Health Research & Innovation Day

Thursday, November 5, 2020

The NEW deadline for submissions is June 26, 2020.