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Message from the Scientific Director



I am pleased to present to you the summer edition of **Grey Matters**, in which we highlight the work of some of Canada's top researchers in aging, bring you up-to-date on Institute news from the last few months, and let you know of some upcoming events.

The Institute has been very involved in advancing the Mobility in Aging (MiA) initiative. Several new funding opportunities for research and salary support were launched in mid-July. These are listed below in the "Funding Opportunities". We will also be hosting by invitation, a national forum, 'Mobility in Aging: Mobilizing Researchers and Stakeholders' in late September, to engage end-users of research knowledge in a discussion with investigators representative of a range of fields in mobility research. The objective is for this discussion of needs and opportunities in science and knowledge translation to generate new research partnerships and more effective uptake of research outcomes.

In early June, we co-hosted with the British Columbia Network on Aging Research (BCNAR), the Institute of Aging's second Summer Program in Aging, SPA 2007. More details about this very successful venture are found in the article below.

The Institute has also recently released some key publications (all of which can be found in PDF and HTML format on the Institute's website (www.cihr.gc.ca/e/8671.html):

- The Future is AGING, the Institute's Strategic Plan for 2007-2012 - sets the course for the Institute over the next five years
- The 2005-07 Institute of Aging Biennial Report - with features on some CIHR-IA funded researchers and teams as well as the Institute's progress on our strategic initiatives.
- The Regional Seniors' Workshops on Aging Summary Report - synthesizes the results of the five workshops held across Canada from 2004 to 2006

I'd like to thank those researchers who have sent us their news and encourage all of you whose research on aging is funded by CIHR to keep us posted on your work and the outcomes of your research and knowledge translation activities.



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KUDOS: ORDER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Order of British Columbia

Congratulations to **Dr. Max Cynader**, Director of the University of British Columbia Brain Research Centre and a member of the IA Institute Advisory Board, who has been appointed to Order of British Columbia in recognition of his accomplishments as a world leader in the field of brain research, a scientific entrepreneur, and a generous contributor to his community and society.

Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences

In the May issue of the **Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences**, the editor-in-chief, Luigi Ferrucci, in a review of the more than 100 articles published in the journal in 2006, stated that there was at least "one gangbuster in each issue". He went on to "highlight 12 outstanding articles that I consider milestones in the geriatric literature". One of the papers cited was an article whose two first authors are CIHR-funded researchers **Dr. François Béland** and **Dr. Howard Bergman**. Congratulations to them both!



SPA 2007



Manon Guay, winner of the SPA 2007 Student Poster Competition

The second **Institute of Aging Summer Program in Aging (SPA)** was held in collaboration with the **BC Network on Aging (BCNAR)** in June this year. 52 masters, doctoral and post-doctoral students from universities across Canada and from across all disciplines of aging research met for four days in the beautiful lakeside setting of Harrison Hot Springs Resort in British Columbia.

Both BCNAR and IA selected mentors for the program consisting of presentations and interactive workshops on interdisciplinarity and collaborative teams, peer review, writing successful grant proposals and journal articles, preparing a poster, and knowledge transfer. The feedback from students identified the factors that made the program a success as the opportunity to meet and interact with skilled mentors in formal and informal settings, a chance to meet other students in aging and to share experiences and knowledge. The students have also made some helpful suggestions to improve the program, and these will be taken into account when planning SPA 2008 to be held in Ontario in June next year.

"One thing I really appreciated was the real life research stories - choices mentors have faced, what they did and what they learned. As someone seriously considering a career in academia, it was good to hear their stories - it gave a balanced view of the rewards and challenges of research. Overall, I found it was a very encouraging and informative week. I gained a lot of practical tips and insights that are not often attained in other settings." (SPA 2007 participant)

The SPA 2008 application process will be posted on the IA website in January 2008.



Dr. Rob Petrella

Determination and testing of best practice hip fracture rehabilitation

This project was part of a pilot grant aimed at determining whether gaps in mobility and aging knowledge and care could be reduced by targeted investment in a new research network team whose impact would reach beyond the value of any one group, one study, or one discipline. With a physical plant within the new Aging, Rehabilitation and Geriatric Care Research Centre at Parkwood Hospital, in London Ontario, CIHR-IA funded researcher **Dr. Rob Petrella**, University of Western Ontario, had the opportunity to construct a new team among a diverse group with proven expertise to address gaps in mobility and aging.

It was apparent that not only were hip fracture rehabilitation practices quite variable, so too were the studies used to evaluate them. There were no standard sets of outcome measures or outcomes used to evaluate the efficacy of the studies examined. Dr. Petrella's team was able to make some recommendations that were followed in the subsequent pilot intervention trial.

It was apparent that combined occupational and physical therapy was essential for rehabilitation. Weight-bearing exercise, particularly aerobic exercise, was related to important discharge outcomes.

A research protocol was developed to investigate aerobic and resistant exercise training using a novel approach. Patients were randomized to usual care rehabilitation versus enhanced care rehabilitation. The enhanced care rehabilitation included upper body resistance and aerobic exercise training during the rehabilitation stay to identify the true role of aerobic and resistance exercise on physiological and clinical outcome measures.

Dr. Petrella observed significant training group effect on improvement in cardiovascular fitness as well as all physical function outcome measures. The majority of studies to this point had suggested that the training effects may occur only in the trained muscles not transferred to untrained muscles. This is the first study to find changes in physical functioning post-hip fracture using upper body exercise training protocol.

A paper on these results has been accepted for publication by Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

The complete report is on the IA website at www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/34783.html.

Pump Up Your Brain

Can being buff make you brainy? That's what CIHR-IA funded **Dr. Brian Christie**, a University of British Columbia neuroscientist, is trying to find out. He investigates biological mechanisms that help the brain create new cells, or neurons, as a result of exercise.

He is especially interested in how exercise can help generate new cells in the adult brain. His findings offer hope of cellular repair and replacement in conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke, schizophrenia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Dr. Christie, an associate professor in the division of neuroscience and a member of the Brain Research Centre at UBC Hospital, was one of the first researchers to discover that exercise promotes the birth of brain cells, a process called neurogenesis, in the hippocampus -- an area of the brain involved with learning and memory.

Now he is investigating effects of exercise on the aging hippocampus, in animal models. Normal aging means loss of brain cells and branches of cells called dendrites that allow communication between cells. In humans, these losses start around age 60-65. Dr. Christie is focused on the continual introduction of new neurons into the adult brain via exercise and how they integrate into the existing neural architecture to promote better learning and memory.

Dr. Christie's research also uses animal models that mimic functional impairment seen in Alzheimer's disease, stroke and dementias such as Down syndrome. He has found that exercise in adults not only creates new neurons in the hippocampus, it also increases the number of synapses and the complexity of dendrites. It all adds up to increased computational power for learning and memory.

So how much exercise is needed? Only about 20-30 minutes of brisk walking a day, says Dr. Christie. But don't think running a daily marathon will make you a genius or cure a brain disease.

"Exercise can't cure disease, but we've seen that it can retard the progression of major illnesses and preserve our mental capacity. And it's never too late to start."

Published in UBC Reports | Vol. 53 | No. 6 | Jun 7, 2007

The full report is in HTML on the IA website at www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26998.html.





Canada-UK Collaboration on Aging

At the Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Ageing and Technology (FICCDAT), held June 16-19 in Toronto, the Institute of Aging sponsored several events, including the inaugural one, **Canada meets UK on Design and Technology for Quality of Life in Old Age**, providing a forum to identify collaboration opportunities and initiate or expand existing Canada-UK research interactions. This event was part of the Institute of Aging's effort to forge alliances with nations and regions that are similarly addressing issues of population aging.



Dr. Janice Keefe speaking at the WHO meeting in London

IA and WHO collaborate on Age-Friendly Cities Initiative

In conjunction with the April 2007 meeting of the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Cities initiative, the CIHR Institute of Aging hosted a discussion for researchers interested in tapping into the wealth of information that this health promotion project is creating. Participants from 23 countries, including 4 Canadian researchers on aging, expressed interest in furthering the research potential of the **WHO Age-Friendly Cities** project. To support a continuation of this international discourse, the Institute of Aging has established a website where researchers who met in April are able to discuss issues, share documents, and collaborate on the preparation of scholarly publications and reports.

For more information, contact Dr. Susan Crawford at susanmc@interchange.ubc.ca.

Did you know?

89% of seniors in Canada report that they are either very satisfied or satisfied with life, according to a report published by Health Canada on the 5th Anniversary of the 2002 United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing. To read the report in full, go to www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/publications_resources/research/categories/population_aging_e/madrid/page00.shtml.



CIHR-IA Réjean Hébert Prize in Geriatric Research

Cary Cunic was the 2007 winner of the CIHR-IA Réjean Hébert Prize in Geriatric Research selected in partnership with the Canadian Geriatrics Society (CGS). This is a \$1,000 award for the best research presentation at the CGS Annual Scientific Meeting by a Medical Resident in a core residency training program. Cary, from The University of British Columbia, received the prize for her presentation "Older Adults after Discharge from an Acute Care for Elders Unit (ACE)".

CIHR-IA Age Plus Award winners

The CIHR Institute of Aging Age Plus Award recognizes excellence in research on aging carried out in Canada by graduate and postdoctoral students and clinical residents from all disciplines, working in the field of aging. The Institute of Aging is pleased to announce the latest winners:



Claudine Auger

University of Montreal

Making Sense of Pragmatic Criteria for the Selection of Geriatric Rehabilitation Measurement Tools

Rachel Dean

University of Victoria

Testing the Efficacy of the Theory of Planned Behavior to Explain Strength Training in Older Adults

Jean François Gagnon

University of Montreal

REM Sleep Behavior and REM Sleep Without Atonia in Probable Alzheimer Disease

Glenyth Nasvadi

Simon Fraser University

Informal Social Support and Use of a Specialized Transportation System by Chronically Ill Older Adults

Kareen Nour

University of Montreal

Behavior Change Following a Self-Management Intervention for Housebound Older Adults with Arthritis: an Experimental Study

For more information and how to apply for the Age Plus Award, visit the IA web site at www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca

Send us your news

The Institute of Aging would like to hear from you. Send us an e-mail at aging@interchange.ubc.ca, or a letter to the address on page 1, if you have any research news or newsletter comments you would like to share.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Institute of Aging is proud to be associated with the following conferences:

4th Canadian Colloquium on Dementia, Vancouver, October 18-20

The Institute of Aging is the sponsor of the Opening Plenary by **Dr. Ian McDowell**, *Rethinking the Causes of Dementia: Moving Beyond the Risk Factor Paradigm*.

The Institute will also sponsor the inaugural **Cognitive Impairment in Aging (CIA) Partnership Workshop for Emerging Careers in Research** on Thursday, October 18, 2007, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Through this workshop, the CIA Partnership, a consortium of private, non-governmental, voluntary and government organizations established to work together to develop a National Research Strategy for Canada to further research in Alzheimer Disease and other dementias, seeks to encourage research training in dementia by informing and strengthening career prospects in relevant disciplines and professions. Speakers from various backgrounds will showcase their careers and how they got to where they are today. Information will also include sources of career development support.

Students and Fellows interested in participating, please contact Gwendoline Simard at gsimard@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

WWW.ccd2007.ca

Institute of Aging - Canadian Research Forum on Aging (IA-CRFA)

Calgary, November 1-3



Chinook Winds
Shaping the landscape of aging

Canadian Association on Gerontology
36th Annual Scientific & Educational Meeting
Nov 1-3, 2007 Hyatt Regency, Calgary AB

Canadian Association on Gerontology / Association canadienne de gériatrie

The IA-CRFA will be held in conjunction with **Canadian Association on Gerontology 2007 Annual Symposium and Educational Meeting**. In keeping with our focus on building capacity in aging research, the forum will include a workshop on preparing applications for CIHR research and salary support, the CIHR-IA Student Poster Competition, a student lunch, and the announcement of the CIHR-IA Special Recognition Prize Awards. IA will sponsor the opening Keynote Speaker, **Dr. Mark Clarfield**, Ben Gurion University, and will sponsor, jointly with the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Closing Panel on Research-Policy Interface.

Frailty: From Concept to Research to Practice

The Institute of Aging will host this pre-conference one-day symposium on Thursday, November 1st. The workshop will examine frailty as a useful concept in the understanding of clinical care, public health, and health policies concerning the elderly. **Drs. Francois Beland**, Université de Montréal, and **Mark Clarfield**, Ben Gurion University, are among the experts who will be speaking at this important event.

Registration will be through the CAG-ASEM website: symposium registration is \$25 for those attending the CAG-ASEM; \$125 for those not attending CAG-ASEM.

[WWW. http://www.cagacg.ca/conferences/](http://WWW.http://www.cagacg.ca/conferences/)

UPCOMING MEETINGS cont'd

Gerontological Society of America 60th Annual Scientific Meeting,
San Francisco, November 16-20.

The Institute of Aging will host a **Canadian Researchers Forum** during the GSA Meeting. Please contact Gwendoline Simard at gsimard@cihr-irsc.gc.ca for more information about this event.

WWW.agingconference.com

CURRENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Mobility in Aging (MiA) opportunities:

Emerging Team Grant for Alliances in Mobility in Aging

This funding opportunity supports the establishment of Teams in Mobility in Aging that cross disciplines and sectors so as to accelerate research to action and that provide research career development and research capacity building opportunities.

Letter of intent due: November 1, 2007

Proof of Principle Grants for Mobility in Aging Technologies

The CIHR Institute of Aging will fund applications that are determined to be relevant to Mobility in Aging Technologies. aimed at sustaining and improving the quality of life of seniors.

Letter of intent due: September 17, 2007

Partnerships for Health System Improvement (PHSI)

This initiative is designed to support teams comprised of both researchers and decision makers interested in conducting applied health research useful to health system managers and/or policy makers.

Letter of intent due: October 1, 2007

Emerging Teams in Applied Health Services and Policy Research

This funding opportunity is designed to further strengthen Canadian research activity and capacity by supporting Emerging Teams conducting high-quality applied health services and research and providing superior training opportunities. Eligible teams will consist of at least three independent investigators who will form an integrated and effective research team, ideally interdisciplinary in nature and spanning across regions and universities.

Letter of intent due: November 1, 2007

Research on Aging Advancement Program (RAAP)

Support for activities such as workshops, consensus meetings, network and partnership development, and other activities intended explicitly for the advancement of Canadian aging-related health research and its translation. Applications are accepted 3 times a year.

Next application deadline: September 5, 2007

For these and all funding opportunities offered by the Institute of Aging, visit the new
CIHR Funding Database at
www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26838.html

STUDENT AND TRAINEE OPPORTUNITIES

Recognition Prize in Research on Aging

This consists of a supplement to the research allowance component of the Doctoral Research Award and the Fellowship Award in year one of the award; these supplements being \$1,000 and \$2,500, respectively. The supplement is intended to be used mainly for travel to national or international conferences, workshops or meetings related to research on aging. For the New Investigator Award, a \$5,000 Travel allowance is awarded. Four CIHR IA Recognition Prizes in Research on Aging are awarded each year. Awardees are identified by CIHR as the highest ranking candidate in the field of aging in each of the following regular CIHR Research Personnel Awards competitions: IA Fellowships, IA Doctoral Research Awards and IA New Investigators. *MORE: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26838.html+ Search*

Fellowship Award: Veterans and Dementia

The purpose of this award is to build research capacity to advance clinical knowledge and practice in the field of Dementia and Veterans Care. Three separate Fellowships are announced in this funding opportunity:

Ste. Anne's Hospital - Veterans Affairs Canada - CIHR-IA Fellowship on Veterans and Dementia

The Capital Care Group - CIHR IA Fellowship on Veterans and Dementia

St. Joseph's Health Care London Veterans Care Program - CIHR IA Fellowship on Veterans and Dementia

Application deadline: October 1, 2007 *MORE: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26838.html+ Search*

Fellowship Award: Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA)

The Institute of Aging will consider relevant those applications related to development, design, planning, data collection and/or analysis health measurement studies with emphasis on the CLSA and similar longitudinal studies.

Application deadline: October 1, 2007 *MORE: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26838.html+ Search*

Doctoral Research Award: Occupational Therapy in Mobility in Aging

CIHR through the Small Health Organization Partnership Program (SHOPP), in partnership with the Canadian Occupational Therapy Foundation and the CIHR Institute of Aging Mobility in Aging Initiative will fund applications that are determined to be relevant to specific research priorities described on the website.

Application deadline: October 15, 2007 *MORE: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26838.html+ Search*

NIH-NIA/CIHR-IA Post Doctoral Fellowship Program: Training in Research on Aging in Canada (TRAC)

Open to citizens or non-citizen nationals of the United States, with a PhD or equivalent in a health science field, who wish to join multidisciplinary research teams in research on aging in Canada. Applications are accepted 3 times a year.

Next application deadline: October 5, 2007 *MORE: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/31570.html#2*

Trainee Travel Awards

These awards encourage interdisciplinary dialogue and cross-disciplinary exposure of research on aging and seniors' issues. IA provides travel funds for Masters and Doctoral students, and Post-doctoral fellows to present their work at a conference, workshop or symposium. The maximum amount for a single award is \$1,000. Applications are accepted 3 times a year.

Next application deadline: October 2, 2007 *MORE: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/33030.html*



Age Plus Award

This award recognizes excellence in research on aging carried out in Canada. Awarded annually to 10 to 12 authors of a published, scientific article on aging, the Age+ Award is aimed at graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and residents from all disciplines, conducting research in aging. The Application Deadlines are March 1st and October 2nd. Each award offered annually is \$1,000.

Next application deadline: October 2, 2007 *MORE: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26987.html*

FUNDING DECISIONS

Knowledge Translation Network in Alzheimer and Dementia

As a result of their Letter of Intent, the team of **Dr. Kenneth Rockwood**, Dalhousie University, and **Dr. John K. Le Clair**, Queen's University and Dalhousie University, have been invited to submit a full application by November 1, 2007, for funding to create the Canadian Dementia Knowledge Translation Network (CDKTN) to develop a specific training program for new health practitioners and researchers, rooted in knowledge translation and aimed at creating a new brand of 'dementia knowledge translation collaborators'.

Information on all IA funding decisions can be seen on the IA website at
www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/33321.html

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

SEPTEMBER
3-6

8th European Sociological Association Conference

Glasgow, Scotland

www.esa8thconference.com/

SEPTEMBER
24-25

2nd National Conference of the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health: New Directions in Seniors Mental Health

Toronto, ON

www.ccsmh.ca/en/about/whatsHappening.cfm

OCTOBER 10-
13

23rd Alzheimer's Disease International conference: New Perspectives, New Hope

Caracas, Venezuela

www.ccsmh.ca/en/about/whatsHappening.cfm

OCTOBER 14-
18

13th International Psychogeriatric Association Congress

Osaka, Japan

www.ipa-online.net/ipaonlinev4/main/meetings/2007osaka/meetings_2007osaka.html

OCTOBER 18-
20

4th Canadian Colloquium on Dementia

Vancouver, BC

<http://www.ccd2007.ca/>

NOVEMBER 1-3

CAG (Canadian Association on Gerontology) Annual Scientific Meeting 2007

Calgary, AB

http://www.cagacg.ca/conferences/400_e.php

NOVEMBER
16-20

Gerontological Society of America 60th Annual Scientific Meeting

San Francisco, CA

<http://www.agingconference.com/>

FEBRUARY
22-23, 2008

ICADI (International Conference on Aging, Disability & Independence) 2008

St. Petersburg, FL

Abstract submission deadline: September 1, 2007

<http://www.icadi.phhp.ufl.edu/>