

THE IALH UPDATE

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Memory Café Victoria: A Welcoming Place



Photo credit: Centre for Ageing Better

Contributed by S. Roy

In 2020, Sanjit Roy, a doctoral student in the Social Dimensions of Health Program at UVic, was awarded the Ruth A. Gardner Research Award by the Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation. The award supports IALH Student Affiliates who are undertaking a clinical or applied research project designed to enhance and advance care for individuals with chronic conditions who are aging. The following provides a summary of Sanjit's research project.

This research project explored the impact of an intergenerational virtual Memory Café on the health, well-being, and quality of life of persons with dementia and their care partners. Persons living with dementia are at risk for stigma and social isolation—and those risks have been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the Memory Café was to provide opportunities for social connection, learning, and meaningful engagement using a strengths-based approach that focused on creativity and imagination.

A mixed methods research design was used with data collected by telephone interview, weekly polls through video conferencing (i.e., Zoom), and online pre- and post- program questionnaires (i.e., Survey Monkey). A convenience sample of six dyads (i.e., persons living with dementia and their care partners) was recruited. The program was delivered using Zoom due to pandemic restrictions prohibiting in-person gatherings. Professionally led arts-based activities focusing on creative engagement and imagination were offered for one hour each week for twelve weeks.

Findings from the weekly polls indicated that participants living with dementia enjoyed interacting with others, learning new things and tapping into their creativity. Analyses of the weekly recordings of each activity showed that most participants were smiling and laughing in all activities. Based on pre- and post- questionnaires, some quantitative measures revealed positive trends although none were significant due to the small sample size. For example, among persons living with dementia, the physical health component score showed improvement, and the loneliness and negative affect scores decreased. Care partner results were not significant either. However, thematic analyses of qualitative data identified several themes - increases in social connections, greater happiness, a more positive mood, being present in the moment, and reconnecting with old memories.

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Overall, findings indicated that Memory Café Victoria had a positive impact on participants, particularly on social connections and mood. Participants reported that it was a caring and safe space conducive to learning, having fun, and getting to know others. Online activities were not a good 'fit' for all participants however since they did not allow persons living with dementia or their care partners to easily develop friendships through the Zoom format.

At present, few community-based programs are available that are inclusive of persons living with dementia and which offer engaging activities emphasizing creativity and imagination. Findings from this project point to the potential benefits of participation in high quality arts programs for persons living with dementia and their care partners. However, additional research is needed to identify best practices for dementia informed arts programs.

Resources

National Standards for Long Term Care in Canada

The Standards Council of Canada, the Canadian Standards Association and the Health Standards Organization are currently developing two complementary National Standards for Long Term Care in Canada – the National Long Term Care Services Standard, and the Operation and Infection Prevention and Control of Long-Term Care Homes Standard. The standards were developed following a series of consultations which have been summarized in three reports: [*What We Heard Report #1: Findings from HSO's Inaugural National Survey on Long-Term Care*](#), [*What We Heard Report #2: Findings from HSO's LTC Standard Consultation Workbooks and Town Halls*](#) and [*What We Heard*](#).

Upcoming Events

Aging Well: The Brain - Body Connection (An Elder Academy Event)

Several factors influence our ability to age well. Some of these, such as genetics, are not under our control. Others, such as exercising regularly and taking care of our mental health, are modifiable. This series will examine the impact of physical activity on brain health as well as the impact technology can play in understanding and modifying behaviours. This May, IALH has teamed up with the UVic Retirees Association to present *Aging Well: The Brain - Body Connection*, an Elder Academy Event.

When: May 7, 14, 21 and June 4 10:00 am - noon (PDT)

Where: Online or in-person at Cordova Bay Community Place, 5238 Cordova Bay Rd

Cost: \$20 for all four sessions

Saturday, May 7: *Exercise is Cerebrovascular Medicine for All Ages*

Presented by IALH Research Fellow Dr. Kurt Smith, Associate Professor, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education.

Saturday, May 14: *Digitize Your Exercise: How Digital Technologies Are Shaping How We Monitor, Prescribe and Augment Our Physical Activities*

Presented by Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Yoah Sui, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education.

Saturday, May 21: *Building Brain Resiliency and Healthy Aging: Positive Effects of Physical Activity and Concussions in the Aging Brain*

Presented by IALH Research Fellow Dr. Mauricio Garcia-Barrera, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology and Ms. Stacey Horton, Actor, Dancer and Choreographer

Saturday, June 4: *Interactions Between Physical Activity and Mental and Cognitive Health: What Do We Know and What Next?*

Presented by IALH Research Fellow Dr. Theone Paterson, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

For more information on each topic and speakers, [please see the poster](#).

To attend **in person**, register at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/aging-well-tickets-312540696637>

To attend **online**, register at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/aging-well-tickets-312538831057>

Upcoming Events (cont'd)

Call to Mind: Listening to Family Caregivers

May 18, 2022, 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Hickman Lecture Theatre, University of Victoria or view livestream

Call to Mind is a podcast series from the University of Victoria about love and memory loss that was recorded during the pandemic. Caregivers share intimate audio diaries and conversations about the rewards and challenges of caregiving, the impacts of isolation, finding joy by living in the present and staying in love when everything else is changing. The four-episode series was launched in January during Alzheimer's Awareness Month. Our event highlights Family Caregivers Month by recognizing and celebrating the vital role of family caregivers, particularly those caring for persons living with dementia. Join Debra Sheets, a nursing professor and researcher with the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health at the University of Victoria and a distinguished panel for an engaging event in which we will listen to podcast excerpts with attention to empathy, connection and vulnerability, to inform the ways in which we can support caregivers and persons living with dementia.

Panelists:

Jen Lyle, CEO, Alzheimers Association of BC

Brenda Brophy, Family Caregiver & Call to Mind Storyteller

Barb McLean, Executive Director, Family Caregivers of BC

Isobel MacKenzie, BC Seniors Advocate

Registration information will be available at <https://www.calltomindpodcast.com/>

Access 101

May 31, 2022, 10:00 – 11:30 am, via Zoom

Access 101 provides an introduction to the lived experience of disability. The presentation is targeted to individuals who want to learn about language best practices, interaction tips, different mobility devices and service animals. The goal of the presentation is to reduce the anxiety that some individuals may feel about saying and doing the "wrong thing" in an inclusive environment. Hosted by Accessibility Consultant Amy Amantea, the presentation will highlight ways we can interact with each other with dignity and autonomy for everyone. For more information or to register, go to https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0oCm-Hz1-Q1C5A8X9mKUbaW

Research Opportunities

Participate in Study Investigating Impacts of COVID-19 on Rural and Remote British Columbians

Researchers from the University of Victoria are inviting British Columbians who live in rural and remote communities to take part in an online survey examining how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their wellbeing.

The survey is open to anyone who lives in a rural and/or remote community in British Columbia, is 18 or older, and can complete an online questionnaire in English. We encourage individuals of diverse ages and backgrounds to share their experiences so that our survey results can reflect the voices of rural and remote residents and speak to their needs during these unprecedented times.

The survey takes around 15-30 minutes to complete and can be accessed by clicking here: <https://bit.ly/3fJKc1u>

Participants will be entered into a draw to win one of several cash prizes, up to \$500.

This survey has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria (HREB #21-0127). Further information can be obtained from Principal Investigators Brianna Turner (briannat@uvic.ca) and Theone Paterson (tpaterson@uvic.ca).

Research Opportunities (Cont'd)

Volunteers needed

Aged 65+



I am a research student at the University of Victoria seeking participants for a study about age and climate change. We need YOUR help!

To participate in this study, you will respond to an online survey from the comfort of your own home. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. We would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics approval from the University of Victoria Research Ethics Board.

Participation is free and anonymous. All opinions are welcome.

If you would like to take part, please contact myself or my research supervisor for more information!

Maddy McHugh

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This study is being supervised by:

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