



THE IALH UPDATE

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Exploring the Experiences of Inner-City Health Care and Social Service Providers During the Opioid Epidemic and COVID-19 Pandemic



Nancy Clark, Assistant Professor in UVic School of Nursing. UVic Photo Services

According to citizen responses in the Victoria Foundation's 2019 *Victoria's Vital Signs* report, mental health is the leading health challenge across service sectors. An article in the July 31 issue of *The Globe and Mail* reported that more than 21,000 Canadians have died from a drug overdose since 2016. In BC, Victoria has experienced the third highest number of fentanyl-detected toxicity deaths in the province (after Vancouver and Surrey).

Although the compounded public health emergencies of the opioid epidemic and COVID-19 have resulted in a comprehensive set of supports to help vulnerable communities and reduce overdose deaths, little attention has been paid to the experiences of harm reduction workers, housing support workers, shelter workers and community responders. *The Globe and Mail* article noted that workers at the forefront of the opioid epidemic have experienced decreased mental health in the context of COVID-19. Cumulative stress, complex and overwhelming grief, and trauma have resulted from caring for vulnerable community members and witnessing tragic deaths.

Dr. Nancy Clark, an Assistant Professor in UVic's School of Nursing and an IALH faculty affiliate has received a Victoria Foundation Research Grant to explore the front line experiences of health care and social service providers working in inner city environments during the overlapping opioid epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic. In partnership with colleagues at UVic's School of Nursing and Department of Psychology, findings from this research will be used to advocate and create change for better coverage and psychological supports for workers on the front lines.

The 2019 *Victoria's Vital Signs* report can be found at <https://victoriafoundation.bc.ca/vital-signs/>
The July 31 *Globe and Mail* article can be found at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-toxic-drug-crisis-pandemic-have-left-front-line-workers-struggling-to/>

"I'm still learning"

-Michelangelo at age 87

Decade of Healthy Aging and CLSA Data



Photo: Centre for Ageing Better

The United Nations Decade of Healthy Aging (2021-2030) is a global collaboration that brings together governments, organizations, professionals, academics, the private sector and the media to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live.

The Decade will focus on four areas:

- **Creating Age-Friendly Environments** — Age-friendly environments are created by removing physical, social and economic barriers and developing services, products, technologies, systems and policies that address the social determinants of healthy aging. Social determinants of healthy aging include, but are not limited to, access to nutritious food, safe housing, and affordable transportation.
- **Combating Ageism** — Negative attitudes regarding older individuals are common across societies and rarely challenged. Negative stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory behaviours towards people on the basis of their age can have detrimental effects on their health and well-being. The many contributions of older individuals to society need to be recognized.
- **Ensuring the Provision of Integrated Care** — Older individuals require access to good quality essential health resources such as: preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and end-of-life services; vital medicines; dental care; and health and assistive technologies. Use of these resources should not cause financial hardship.
- **Ensuring the Provision of Long-Term Care** — Older individuals may reach a point in their lives where substantial declines in physical and/or mental capacity makes it impossible for them to care for themselves without additional supports and assistance. Access to good quality long-term care is critical for individuals to maintain functional abilities, enjoy basic human rights and live with dignity.

Improving the lives of older individuals at the local, regional, national and international levels will require the concerted efforts of multiple stakeholders. The involvement of older individuals is critical as they are agents of change as well as recipients of services. Building capacity among various stakeholders, and connecting stakeholders is essential for leveraging resources, sharing experiences, and aligning actions. Effective governance and leadership is required to foster healthy aging and reduce inequities through the development of appropriate laws, policies, financial resources and accountability mechanisms. Data and research are required to help inform local and national action on healthy aging.

An in-depth analysis of data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) was included in the *Baseline Report for the Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030)*. This report addresses five areas:

- Healthy aging, the Decade's actions and a pathway to accelerate impact by 2030
- A look at healthy aging worldwide at the current time
- Improvements that could be expected by the end of the decade
- How older individuals and stakeholders can work together to positively impact the lives of older people
- Opportunities to boost collaboration and impact by the next reporting period in 2023

For more information on the Decade of Healthy Aging, go to <https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing>. The Baseline Report is available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240017900>

IALH Would Like to Hear From You

IALH would like to obtain a better understanding of why you have chosen to be involved with the institute and how we can continue to engage with you in a meaningful manner. If you have not already done so, we would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete a short survey that you'll find on the IALH website (<https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/aging/participatesupport/survey/index.php>). If you have questions or would like to discuss the survey by phone, please contact Jo Ann Miller, IALH Research Manager, at ialhresearch@uvic.ca. **Please respond by September 15, 2021.**

Upcoming Events

Advanced Patient-Centred Measurement Through Team-Based Care

Thursday September 9, 2021 10:00 – 11:00 am via Webinar

Patients are often asked to complete surveys about their health care preferences. But how can the data be meaningfully integrated into care? Presenters Selena Davis and Marcy Antonio will present new methods to encourage data sharing between patients and their care team and will explore ways that this data sharing can result in more patient-centred care. Ms. Davis is a strategist and researcher with the BC Ministry of Health and Ms. Antonio is a PhD student in Interdisciplinary Studies (Nursing & Health Information Science) and an IALH student affiliate. The webinar, which is part of the Methods Matters Webinar Series hosted by the BC SUPPORT Unit, is designed for both patients and researchers.

To register for the webinar, go to https://bcahns.zoom.us/webinar/register/7516287019814/WN_OcMf4EZYRoWtZFLVMYCyxA

For information on other webinars in this series, go to <https://www.bcahns.ca/learning/methods-matters-webinar-recordings-bc-support-unit>

Aging is a Reward, Not a Punishment

Friday October 1, 2021 1:00 – 2:15 pm via Zoom

Each year, in partnership with the Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation, IALH hosts a public forum to recognize the International Day of Older Persons. This year, we're highlighting the United Nation's Decade of Healthy Aging by focusing on the positive aspects of growing older. Panelists include: Dr. Andrew Wister, Director of the Gerontology Research Centre at Simon Fraser University; Ms. Jodi Mucha, Executive Director of BC Healthy Communities; and Ms. Louise Rolland, Coordinator of Self-Management Programs in the Vancouver Coastal and Sunshine Coast region and a member of IALH's Ladner office.

Registration will open September 1. The link will be posted on our Events page on our website (<https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/aging/events/index.php>) and on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/uvic.institute.on.aging>).

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease: Current Research and Early Detection Methods

UVic Continuing Studies General Health and Wellness Course

Tuesday November 16, 2021 6:30 – 8:00 pm Online

Fee: \$40 plus GST

Code: HPHE307 2021F D01

Dementia is not a natural part of aging. It is an umbrella term that encompasses all types of neurodegenerative diseases that affect memory, judgement, and cognitive skills severely enough to impact daily life. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and comprises nearly 70% of all cases. During this course you will find out what researchers currently know about the disease as well as new methods for early detection. This course will be led by Jamie Knight, a PhD student in Psychology and an IALH student affiliate.

To register, go to <https://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/health-wellness-and-safety/courses/dementia-and-alzheimers-disease-current-research-and-early-detection-methods>

MEMORY CAFÉ VICTORIA

FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH MEMORY LOSS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS



University of Victoria Students will be Joining Us!
SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 TO DECEMBER 11, 2021

A comfortable and supportive place to socialize, meet new friends, engage in creative activities together, and have fun!

IN THE MOMENT (Face-to- Face)
Selected days, 2-4 PM

Adventures

Harbour Ferry Tour, Bateman Gallery, Royal BC Museum, Eco-Art

ONLINE (ZOOM) PROGRAM
Thursdays 11:00-12:15 PM

Activities

- **Juke Box Days** (Music & Movies)
- **TimeSlips** (Story creation)

ELIGIBILITY

- Fully vaccinated
- Access to a computer and internet
- Walk 6-8 blocks comfortably
- Willing to complete interview and two online surveys

Memory Café is funded (in part) from:

vancouver
foundation



University
of Victoria



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY

For More Information

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