



Centre hospitalier affilié universitaire
A University-Affiliated Hospital Centre

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Community Studies

December 2008

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C.H.A.U. Designation

In April of 2008, St. Mary's Hospital Center obtained the conditional status of *Centre hospitalier affilié universitaire (CHAU)*. The condition to be fulfilled, within a maximum of 5 years, to meet full requirements for research, is receipt of a major research infrastructure award from a provincial or federal governmental health research funding body. This will involve collaboration with McGill

University to recruit researchers to St. Mary's.

Jane McCusker, MD, DrPH, Head of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Community Studies, is currently meeting with researchers in the Hospital to brainstorm specific themes that can guide the development of targeted research programs. The research theme selected should address

priorities of funding bodies, occupy a unique niche in Quebec and Canada, and become recognized nationally and internationally as a center of excellence. Discussions are also underway with key members from McGill University, the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, and other partners to obtain expert guidance and consultation to support this major expansion of research at the hospital.

PROJECT IN PROFILE

Development and Evaluation of a Tele-Homecare Platform for Patients with Cancer and their Family Caregivers

About 90% of cancer care is delivered in an out-patient setting, and thus many people face the impact cancer has on their lives at home. Studies show that patient-centered communication and access to timely supportive care at home from an oncology nurse may improve patient well-being and quality of life. Advances in communication technologies now allow people to receive some components of their healthcare in their home, i.e. "tele-homecare". The added value of video-technology nursing care over regular telephone is the ability of the patient to see and interact with the nurse from a distance, with patients reporting greater empowerment, and an increased sense of security and confidence in managing their illness at home.

In collaboration with the interdisciplinary cancer care team of St. Mary's Hospital Center, a new research program will develop, implement, and

evaluate the delivery of tele-homecare nursing interventions by the oncology nurse to out-patients with cancer and their families using web-based video-conferencing technology. The aim of this service is to increase access to quality care, improve the quality of

life of patients and their family caregivers, and decrease costs. This program will be carried out in two study phases, beginning with an environmental scan and needs assessment, followed by a feasibility study that will involve

the implementation of the Televisit™ system (from the company PHD Medical Inc.) in patients' homes. Global News Canada recently aired a segment on a former tele-homecare project for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (<http://www.televisitsolutions.com/video.htm>). Findings of this innovative study will provide insights as to the feasibility and acceptability of

using tele-homecare for the delivery of supportive cancer care to out-patients. This 3-year research program is being funded entirely by the St. Mary's Hospital Center Foundation, for a total amount of \$250,000.

Dr. Antonia Arnaert is the Principal Investigator of this study. She is an Assistant Professor at the McGill School of Nursing, and is also an Associate Member of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Community Studies at St. Mary's Hospital Center. This study is a joint effort among clinicians and well-established researchers from St. Mary's Hospital Center, McGill University, and other national and international

universities. For more information, please email: antonia.arnaert@mcgill.ca, or you can call her at (514) 398-5624.



First Annual C.A.R.E. Competition

The St. Mary's Hospital Center and Foundation have launched the first annual **Competition Attracting Research Excellence (C.A.R.E.)**, aimed at supporting pilot projects that contribute towards the development of research at St. Mary's, and that result in an increased amount of external research funding received by the Hospital and in peer-reviewed publications. For the 2008-09 competition, **\$48,000**

is available from a general pool of funds to support projects in clinical epidemiology and health services research that are consistent with the research mission of St. Mary's (e.g. research in family medicine, nursing, complementary and alternative medicine, women's health, geriatric psychiatry, emergency services). Up to **\$16,000** may be allocated per project. Investigators affiliated with McGill or another university

may apply, on condition that the Principal Investigator is on staff and/or is an Associate Member of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Community Studies at St. Mary's, and that the project must take place at St. Mary's. The deadline for applications is **November 30, 2008**. Please note that the C.A.R.E. competition replaces the former internal grant competition.

Publication Notice

Health care professionals' attitudes towards complementary and alternative medicine

Maida Sewitch, PhD, and her research team at SMHC, recently published a review of the literature on health professionals' attitudes toward complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). The review summarized the findings of 21 studies of the attitudes toward CAM of various health professional groups such as physicians, nurses, public health professionals, social workers and pharmacists. Dr. Sewitch's team found that holding positive attitudes toward CAM did not correlate with physician referral or prescription patterns, possibly because health care professionals felt they lacked sufficient information about

CAM. Therefore, increasing health professionals' knowledge of CAM therapies and their availability in the community may help to improve patient care.

The journal article reference is: A Literature Review of Health Care Professional Attitudes Toward Complementary and Alternative Medicine (**Sewitch MJ, Cepoiu M, Rigillo N, Sproule D**) (2008). *Complementary Health Practice Review*. 13; 139. You can also access this paper online at the following address:

<http://chp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/13/3/139>

Recent publication by former DCECS staff member

Monica Cepoiu, MD, MSc, recently published an article based on research she conducted at St. Mary's, with **Jane McCusker, MD, DrPH, Martin Cole, MD, Maida Sewitch, MD, PhD, Eric Belzile, MSc, and Antonio Ciampi, PhD**, entitled "Recognition of depression by non-psychiatric physicians - a systematic literature review and meta-analysis" in the January 2008 issue of the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, volume 23 issue 1, pp. 25-36. The objective of her study was to describe and quantitatively summarize the existing data on recognition of depression by non-psychiatric physicians. The conclusion was that the accuracy of depression recognition by non-psychiatrist physicians is low. Further research should focus on developing standardized methods of documenting non-psychiatric physicians' recognition of depression. You can access the abstract of the article at:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17968628>.

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Do you need **HELP** in doing research?

For every stage of a research project, the **Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Community Studies** can help you.....

- With consultation and education (workshops, journal clubs, etc.)



- Use existing Hospital databases for research or quality assessment projects
- Read research papers critically and interpret statistical results
- Conduct systematic literature reviews
- Obtain funding



- Plan studies/surveys
- Prepare consent forms
- Design questionnaires and data collection forms
- Compute a sample size



- Conduct data collection, abstraction
- Conduct chart audits
- Analyze and present data
- Prepare an article for publication