

# Centre on Aging and Health (CAH)

Newsletter

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## The Centre on Aging and Health Holds its 2004-2005 Distinguished Lecture

Story by Michelle Bourgault-Fagnou

Dr. Holly Tuokko, a world renowned gerontology scholar who has conducted extensive research on driving among seniors as well as the early detection of dementia, gave the Centre on Aging and Health 2004-2005 Distinguished Lecture on November 18, 2004.

Dr. Tuokko is a Professor in the Department of Psychology and the Centre on Aging at the University of Victoria and a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Institutes of Aging Senior Investigator (2002-2007). Prior to 1997, she practiced and conducted research as a clinical neuropsychologist in hospital-based and community-based programs for seniors. Centering around issues related to mental health and aging, Dr. Tuokko's research has spanned



Dr. Holly Tuokko addresses faculty, staff, students, and the general public during the CAH 2005-2005 Distinguished Lecture.

from the diagnosis of mental health disorders in older adults to intervention studies with caregivers of persons with dementia. She has been

involved in test development (e.g., The Clock Test published by Multi-Health Systems) and generation of normative

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“Saskatchewan has the highest proportion of people over 65 years of age (14.8%) in all of Canada...”

## The CAH Newsletter

The CAH newsletter is currently accepting submissions for the next issue. Your comments, suggestions, announcements, and CAH-related news items are most welcome.

Please address your submissions to...  
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## The Centre on Aging and Health (CAH) is a Partner in a Provincial Network of Basic and Applied Researchers

Story by Michelle Bourgault-Fagnou, BA

Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos, Dr. David Malloy, and Dr. Mary Hampton represent the CAH in a provincial network of clinical and biomedical researchers from the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan focused on healthy aging. Saskatchewan has the highest proportion of people over 65 years of age (14.8%) in all of Canada, thus collaboration among an interdisciplinary group of

Saskatchewan researchers interested in aging will be tremendously beneficial. Formation of the group will allow for the development of new opportunities for research collaborations that otherwise would not likely occur. Moreover, the interaction should result in a better understanding of the mechanisms associated with aging and thus facilitate the development

of effective low cost interventions that will allow for a more graceful and healthy aging in the population. The group has been successful in attracting funding from the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation and from both Saskatchewan universities. The first retreat of the group took place in November 2004 in Saskatoon and a major research project focusing on prevention of falls was planned.♦

## Australian Researcher Dr. Karen Francis Meets with Centre on Aging and Health Researchers

Story by Amanda Lints, BSc

In the Fall of 2004, Australian researcher Dr. Karen Francis visited the Centre on Aging and Health (CAH) during her tour of Canada. Dr. Francis is a professor of Rural Nursing at Monash University, Australia and has been the First Inaugural Chair of Rural Nursing at Monash University since October 2004. In addition to this prestigious position, Dr. Francis is President of the Association for Australian Rural Nurses Inc., and was previously the head of the School of

Clinical Sciences at Charles Stuart University. Dr. Francis was particularly interested in the ongoing studies at the CAH and met with various researchers during her stay in Regina. One of Dr. Francis' areas of research concerns the role that home care nurses in rural settings play in preventing falls in seniors through the examination of environmental factors and home safety. It is well documented that seniors who experience a

fall have an increased chance of experiencing other health-related problems, including increased pain, anxiety, muscular atrophy, and a higher probability of experiencing additional falls. Thus, Dr. Francis was interested in the ongoing studies at the CAH, led by Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos, concerning pain and falls in seniors. Avenues for possible future collaborations were explored during her meetings with various CAH researchers.♦

## The University of Regina New M.A./M.Sc Program in Gerontology

The University of Regina is now offering an exciting new interdisciplinary research-oriented graduate degree program in Gerontology. Students with undergraduate degrees in kinesiology, psychology, social work, nursing (or other health professional degrees) or biology are encouraged to apply for the 2005 fall semester. The new program is coordinated by the University of Regina's Centre on Aging and Health and involves the collaboration of the Faculty of

Arts, the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies and the Faculty of Social Work. Students can work towards an MA or an MSc degree depending on the nature of their thesis research. The new program aims to provide research training and specialized gerontological knowledge to health professionals and to students wishing to pursue doctoral studies and research careers. The program emphasizes both the physiological and psychosocial aspects of aging.

### Admission Requirements

Applicants must have a 4-year undergraduate degree in kinesiology, psychology, social work, nursing, biology, or an equivalent health professional degree. The deadline for receiving admission applications is March 31.

For further information please contact the program coordinator John Barden.

Ph: (306) 585-4629

e-mail: [John.Barden@uregina.ca](mailto:John.Barden@uregina.ca) ♦

## Regina's Third Brain Awareness Week Scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>

Story by Jaime Williams, MA

This year's Brain Awareness Week is scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>. The goal of Brain Awareness Week is to advance public awareness about the progress, promise, and benefits of brain research. In order to accomplish this goal, the organising agency, the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, is joined by medical and research organisations, patient advocacy groups, the National Institutes of Health, other government organisations, hospitals universities, k-12 schools, and professional organisations. The goal of these partnering agencies is to promote brain research within their own communities.

2005 will mark the third year that

Brain Awareness Week activities are organised in Regina. Once again, the Centre on Aging and Health (CAH) and the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan are full partnering organisations and are joined by numerous other community groups including the Seniors' Education Centre and the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina.

Similar to previous years, events will include a Public Forum at the University of Regina (organised by the CAH), lunch hour symposiums, community displays, and a children's outreach program. New events that are in preparation include a "Brain Walk", which is an interactive

walk through a variety of stations where volunteers teach about the different functions of the brain and about how to keep the brain safe and healthy and a "Brain Show" which has been proposed to kick-off the week and will showcase displays from a variety of participating organisations including the CAH. A centralised location has been proposed for this activity and schools and other community organisations will be invited to participate. The location has yet to be finalized.

For more information concerning Brain Awareness Week and dates and locations of Regina-based activities, please visit our website at <http://uregina.ca/willia4j>. ♦

## The Centre on Aging and Health Holds its 2004-2005 Distinguished Lecture (continued from page 1)

data for older adults on a variety of neuropsychological measures. Currently, the focus of her research is the evolution of cognitive disorders in older adults and the impact of these disorders on functional competencies such as driving and financial management. She has published widely in the field of mental health and aging and co-authored a comprehensive textbook on geriatric neuropsychological assessment. She has been an investigator on numerous research projects including the Canadian Study of Health and Aging, a nation-wide longitudinal investigation of cognitive function

and dementia in late life.

Dr. Tuokko delivered her lecture entitled "Perceptions, Beliefs, and Behaviours of Older Drivers," to an appreciative audience at the University of Regina. The research reported examined the perceptions of risk, beliefs and attitudes, and openness to change of older participants taking part in research on older driver education and mobility. Dr. Tuokko and her colleagues' suggest that educational materials for older drivers may need to be targeted differently for men and women. In

addition, driving may serve as a strong motivator for older adults to engage in activities (e.g., physical, educational) that enhance their mobility. She reported that it is anticipated that psychosocial factors related to driving such as driver perception, beliefs and openness to change will be useful for maximizing the fit between strategies for improving safe driving and outcomes.

This talk was sponsored by both the CAH and Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), and was well attended by faculty, staff, students, and the general public.♦

## Centre on Aging and Health Membership

Those interested in joining the CAH may complete the application form available online at the CAH website or request an application form from Dr. Gordon Asmundson,

Membership Committee Chair.

Please mail applications to Dr. Gordon Asmundson at the following address:

Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies  
University of Regina  
3737 Wascana Parkway  
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If not, please email your research interests to [lisa.drinkwater@uregina.ca](mailto:lisa.drinkwater@uregina.ca) for inclusion.