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DISTINGUISHED LECTURE FEBRUARY 17, 2017: MAXIMIZING BRAIN HEALTH & INDEPENDENCE IN OLD AGE

On Friday, February 17th (in RIC 119 at 6pm), we will host our 2017-2018 Distinguished Lecture.

This year's speaker is Dr. Maureen Schmitter-Edgecombe, Professor of Psychology at Washington State University. Her lecture, titled "Maximizing Brain Health and Independence in Old Age," will discuss research about optimizing health and wellness as people age, reducing dementia risk, and improving healthcare delivery through preventative interventions and smart and assistive technologies. Moreover, Dr. Schmitter-Edgecombe will discuss research related to healthy brain aging behaviours and an intervention to promote sustained behaviour change, as well as work with aging assistive and intelligent technologies that can support activities of daily living and provide real-time intervention.

The long-term objective of the work that she will present is to extend the everyday functional independence of the aging population through preventative interventions and by developing smart environments and (continued on page 2)



Dr. Maureen Schmitter-Edgecombe

Scott J. Wilson
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DISTINGUISHED LECTURE ON FEBRUARY 17: MAXIMIZING BRAIN HEALTH AND INDEPENDENCE IN OLD AGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

technologies that promote proactive health care and provide real-time assistance. Her research has been funded by over \$10 million in grants from the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, the Alzheimer's Association, the Department of Defense, and by the Life Sciences Discovery Fund and the Attorney General's Office of Washington State.

Dr. Schmitter-Edgecombe has published more than 100 peer-reviewed publications investigating attention, memory, and executive function abilities, everyday functioning and the efficacy of interventions with aging, neurodegenerative disorders, and traumatic brain injury populations. Dr. Schmitter-Edgecombe has worked extensively with older adults and cognitively impaired populations.

If members of the public or researchers have ideas for topics to be discussed by future scientific visitors, please send them to Scott.J.Wilson@uregina.ca

BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK PRESENTATION ON TECHNOLOGY-ASSISTED GAMING ACTIVITIES FOR SENIORS WITH DEMENTIA (MARCH 13)

In March, during Regina Brain Awareness Week, we will be hosting a public talk and workshop by Dr. Mark Chignell who will discuss use of serious games and ambient activities in dementia care.

Dr. Chignell is a Professor of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering at the University of Toronto. He is also Director of the Interactive Media Lab, the President of Vocalage Inc., a University of Toronto spinoff company, and a visiting scientist at both the IBM Centre for Advanced Studies and Keio University in Japan.

Dr. Chignell was initially trained in psychology, but later moved to engineering. He is interested in the problem of developing technologies and interfaces that amplify human capability and respect human limitations. He is a member of the federally-funded AGE-WELL NETWORK of National Centres of Excellence (see related story about AGE-WELL on page 7 of this newsletter).

We will have more details about Dr. Chignell's event soon, but please save the date of the evening of **March 13th** and check our website <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/> or twitter feed @UofRAGINGCentre for the latest.



Dr. Mark Chignell

Want to hear about more CAH events? Follow us on Twitter: @UofRAGINGCentre 

CAH SMALL GRANT CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF NEW INVESTIGATOR!

One of the CAH's mandates is to promote aging and health research. To that end, we offer a yearly CAH Small Grants Research Award that helps fund projects or other work aimed to lead to the preparation of a major national application in the areas of health and aging.

2015-2016 CAH grant recipient Dr. Jennifer Gordon (Assistant Professor, Psychology, University of Regina) used her \$1,500 grant to facilitate her application for a much larger research grant: approximately \$120,000 from the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF). Dr. Gordon was awarded a SHRF Establishment Grant for her research examining the relationship between estrogen fluctuation and depression in the menopause transition (i.e., the phase in a woman's life leading up to the occurrence of menopause).

Gordon said the seed money was helpful because it was used for pilot data collection (hormone analysis) for the SHRF application. The data was necessary to demonstrate study feasibility and allowed Gordon to resubmit her application to SHRF. That submission was successful, so much so that it earned Dr. Gordon a SHRF Excellence Award for being the top-ranked Establishment Grant proposal in the Socio-Health, Systems and Clinical category. Dr. Gordon accepted

her award at their 2016 Santé Awards Evening in Saskatoon on December 1st.

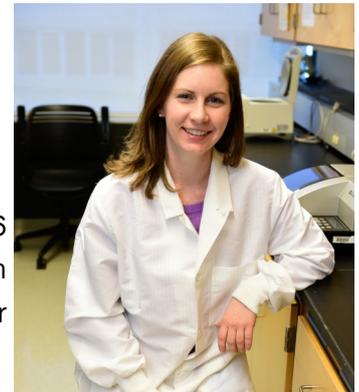
Gordon's study examines how the hormonal changes that

accompany the menopause transition increase women's risk for depression. Gordon says she also hopes this study will help identify which women are likely to be most sensitive to these hormonal changes and thus at greatest risk for depression, so that psychological interventions such as mindfulness meditation or pharmacological interventions, such as hormone therapy, can be used to prevent the development of depression in the menopause transition, which affects between 26% and 33% of women.

The application deadline for the next 2017-2018 CAH Small Grants Research Award is December 15, 2017 (subject to availability of funding).

To apply, or for more information: <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/> or cah@uregina.ca or 306.337.8477

For more information on Dr. Gordon's research, please contact Jennifer.Gordon@uregina.ca



Dr. Jennifer Gordon
(Photo by Debra Marshall for SHRF)

Advertise in the CAH Newsletter

University of Regina Unit & Researcher Rates (per page):

Full: \$100 Half: \$50 Quarter: \$35

Corporate Rates (per page):

Full: \$150 Half: \$100 Quarter: \$85

Contact CAH Administrator at 306.337.8477 or cah@uregina.ca for more information

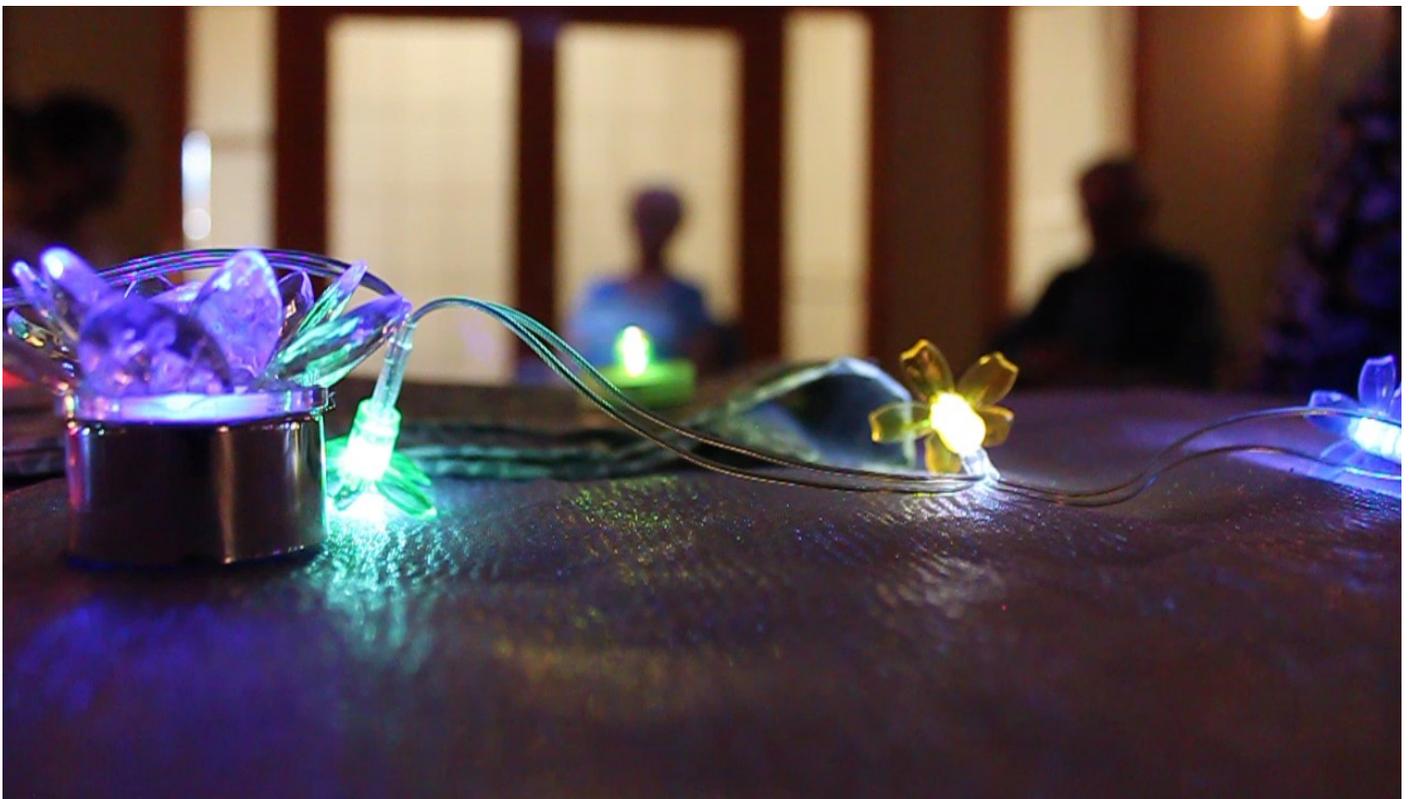
MOVEMENT, VISUAL ARTS, AND DEMENTIA

Dr. Jaime Williams, CAH Member, visual artist, and U of R Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts, recently completed a project on movement, visual arts, and dementia with the aid of the Alzheimer's Society of Saskatchewan. The project involved exercise, storytelling, dance, and art, and was guided by themes of communication and memory.

Dr. Williams, who has a PhD in Psychology and a Master's of Fine Arts, wanted to explore memory and storytelling from an embodied perspective (where stories are told vocally, but also physically through

movement) to determine whether that can be therapeutic.

One couple participated in the project in hopes of finding comfort, laughter, and relaxation. The husband has Alzheimer's disease, which is obviously a challenge for the couple. Dr. Williams' workshop gave them a chance to bond, but also to "just be silly and relax with people you don't know well" according to his wife. The man said he went into the project without any real expectations, but was pleasantly surprised by the fun he had and how relaxed and rejuvenated he felt afterwards.



A glimpse inside the workshop: Photo by Adrianna Lademann

In a series of sessions, the couple met with Dr. Williams, who transformed a boardroom into an ambient space with different lighting and colours and soothing sounds. Dr. Williams modeled silly movements that the couple mimicked. She also provided prompts for writing and art and other forms of expression that the couple participated in. Dr. Williams said she learned a lot about body language and how it connects to the mind and that “the body knows things the mind often does not.”

In terms of dealing with dementia or other practical uses for this type of activity, Dr. Williams said this is was just a small step along the way to proper research into the topic and that the goal of the sessions was not to create better artists or have specific outcomes, but to provide the couple with skills, not technique: ways for them to use art and movement as part of a strategy to “be in

the world” when illness often takes one out of the public and makes them much more private.

Dr. Williams hopes to offer more of these workshops. The couple said they would certainly participate again, but only after other couples had the chance to experience it. Both thanked Dr. Williams for letting them take part in the pilot project.

For more information on this workshop, contact Jaime.Williams@uregina.ca



Dr. Jaime Williams

Apply now for the 2017/2018 CAH Small Grants Research Award!

Amount Available: \$1,500 Application Deadline: December 15, 2017

This award is intended to fund pilot projects or other work aimed to lead to the preparation of a major national application in the area of health and aging.

To apply, or for more information: <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/>
or cah@uregina.ca or 306.337.8477

CAH WELCOMES THE U OF R'S NEWEST MA/MSC GERONTOLOGY STUDENTS

The CAH is pleased to welcome our latest gerontology graduate students.

Ainsley MacIntyre has a BSc in Neuroscience from Dalhousie University. She attended Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in 2011-2012, so the U of R MA/MSc Gerontology Program gave her a perfect opportunity to return to Saskatchewan.

Ainsley's close relationship with her grandparents and neuroscience background sparked her interest in researching the aging population. She researches pain self-management in older adults and is a varsity athlete and member of the University of Regina Women's Basketball Team.

Rhonda Stopyn received a BSc in Psychology & Human Biology (Hons.) from the University of Toronto. She is interested in how non-verbal expressions of older adults' pain are perceived by professional and informal caregivers. Rhonda became interested in gerontological research after volunteering at a long-term care facility. She hopes her research will improve the quality of life for older adults, especially since Canada's population is aging rapidly. When she's not studying or doing research, Rhonda loves to play piano.

Heather Van Starckenburg has a Master's of Social Work from Wilfred Laurier University. Her professional placements while completing that

degree, one working with refugees from former Yugoslavia and one working with Aboriginal Elders, led her towards gerontological research.

Her research interests focus on First Nations Peoples and successful aging. Heather currently works for Soul's Harbour Rescue Mission as an Outreach Worker for homeless women and received an Employee of the Year Award for her integrity and compassion.

We are very happy to have all three students as a part of our program and look forward to seeing the results of their research soon.

For more information on the MA/MSc Gerontology Program go to <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/ma-msc-in-gerontology/about-the-program> or contact our Gerontology Program Coordinator at Abigail.Wickson-Griffiths@uregina.ca.



Ainsley MacIntyre



Rhonda Stopyn

CAH MEMBERS ARE MAKING MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AGE-WELL NETWORK OF NATIONAL CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

The AGE-WELL Network of National Centres of Excellence is a federally-funded national group of leading researchers working toward improving the quality of life of older adults through the use of technology. Some of the AGE-WELL projects involve CAH members.

Dr. Carrie Bourassa (Chair in Northern and Indigenous Health, Health Sciences North Research Institute in Sudbury, Ontario) and Dr. Debra Morgan (a University of Saskatchewan nurse), for example, are working with a team that is investigating ways of reaching out to those who live outside big cities and also to indigenous people. Their aim is to identify/describe indigenous and rural persons' particular needs and ways in which technology might assist in improving their lives. These researchers are also aiming to address the challenges of connectivity in remote areas.

Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos (University of Regina), a clinical pain assessment expert, co-leads together with Dr. Babak Taati (a computer vision expert based at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute) a project aimed toward the development of an automated easy-to-use computer vision system that would be capable of monitoring, on a continuous basis, signs of pain in seniors with severe dementia who have limitations in ability to communicate. This system is expected to help alleviate unnecessary pain-related suffering by leading to earlier and more effective treatment of pain.



For more information on AGE-WELL, visit <http://agewell-nce.ca/>

BECOME A CAH MEMBER!

Complete the online application form available on our website:

<http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/>

- NEWS AND NOTES -

- ⇒ **Dr. Gordon Asmundson**, CAH Member, received the Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Mentorship from the University of Regina Alumni Association for his work with over 35 University of Regina psychology students in the areas of anxiety disorders, chronic pain, and post-traumatic stress disorder, etc.
- ⇒ **Dr. Carrie Bourassa**, CAH Member, received over \$200,000 from the Canada Foundation for Innovation for the development of a Cultural Safety Evaluation, Training, and Research Lab, which will help address health care system inequities for Indigenous people.
- ⇒ **Dr. Shanthi Johnson**, CAH Member, received Fellow status from The Gerontological Society of America: the world's oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. In addition, Dr. Johnson was awarded the 2016 Award of Innovation at the Regina Chamber of Commerce's Paragon Awards. The award is for research that will positively influence society. Dr. Johnson received the award for the falls prevention research and the development of an exercise program for older adults that live alone.
- ⇒ **Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos**, CAH Director, was named Editor-in-Chief of *Ethics & Behavior*, a scholarly journal that features diverse perspectives on moral issues and conduct.
- ⇒ **Dr. Jennifer Gordon**, CAH Member, received a Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) Excellence Award at the SHRF Santé Awards. Gordon received the Top Establishment Grant: Socio-Health Research (worth nearly \$120,000) for her research on perimenopause.

LONG-TERM CARE RESEARCHERS MEET IN REGINA

This summer, the Research and Community Alliance for Quality of Life in Long-Term Care (The QOL Team) met in Regina for a research meeting for their Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation funded project.

The QOL Team focuses on improving person-centred care and develops ways to slow down mental and physical decline that comes with aging through research into pain management, nutrition, exercise, and falls prevention.

The team includes researchers, clinicians, and administrators from the University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, McMaster University, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and the Saskatoon Health Region.

Recent QOL Team research studies include work on the impact of flaxseed lignan on blood pressure reduction, falls prevention initiatives, pain mitigating effects of social support, seniors' housing options, adult day services for older adults, long-term care staff resilience, vitamin D supplementation in long-term care, Montessori-based interventions for long-term care residents with dementia, as well as validity of the Pain Assessment Checklist (PACSLAC) by person without training in health professions.

Since the first successful grant application in 2008, the team has published numerous articles, and has contributed greatly to improving the lives of older adults in Saskatchewan.

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR THE CAH AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

The **Centre on Aging and Health Award for Innovation in Health Care Delivery** recognizes Regina-based individuals, groups, or organization, offering health care to older adults, who have introduced an innovative approach to service provision or who have conducted field research to evaluate services or programs for older persons.

Winners are presented with the award during a CAH-organized event open to the public such as our annual Distinguished Lecture. Award winners will also be featured in this newsletter and on the CAH website. The winner will be presented with a commemorative certificate and will be offered formal affiliation with the CAH. The award recognizes those in our community that are helping such an important portion of the population

while encouraging others to do the same.

If you know of someone that would be deserving of this award, nominations (of no more than 8 pages) are to be submitted at any time up until **October 15, 2017** for the 2017-18 Award and must include a short nominee biography, a short description of their innovation, as well as letters of support from colleagues and/or service recipients or their family members.

We will announce the 2016-17 winner at our Distinguished Lecture on Friday, February 17th, 2017.

For more information on eligibility, adjudication, or about how to apply, please visit <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/about-cah/innovation-in-health-care-delivery-award> or contact Scott J. Wilson, CAH Administrator, at scott.j.wilson@uregina.ca

JOIN THE CENTRE ON AGING AND HEALTH

We encourage researchers investigating health and aging as well as health professionals with an interest in aging to apply for Centre on Aging and Health (CAH) membership. Members will be a part of a growing network of aging and health researchers, professionals, and trainees. In addition, the CAH can facilitate dissemination of member research to the public through our newsletter, organization of public presentations, on our website, via Twitter, and through other means.

CAH researchers are conducting world-class gerontological research related to Canada. Many of our members work with research clusters that focus on pain in old age, personhood and resilience in senior care, musculoskeletal aging and health, as well as Aboriginal issues in health and aging.

Moreover, members may access the Centre on Aging and Health Directory of Potential Research

Participants: hundreds of potential participants for University of Regina Research Ethics Board approved studies.

Members of the public who are over 65-years of age and are interested in participating in research can sign up by going to www2.uregina.ca/cah, clicking on "Participate in Research," and filling out our simple web form.

Members also receive information on relevant conferences, scholarships, grants, and a variety of other aging-and-health-specific news and events, including those hosted and sponsored by the CAH.

Applying is quick and easy, as you can apply online via our website. Just go to: <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/> and click on "Become a Member."

MA/MSc Gerontology Program

“Seniors make up the fastest growing age group...

By 2051, about one in four Canadians is expected to be 65 or over.”

– Statistics Canada

- Exciting inter-disciplinary, research-oriented graduate degree program.
- Provides research training and specialized gerontology knowledge to health professionals and students.
- Emphasizes both the physiological and psychosocial aspects of aging.
- The collaboration of the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies and the Faculty of Social Work and coordinated by the University of Regina’s Centre on Aging and Health.

Admission Requirements:

4-year undergraduate degree in areas such as, nursing, kinesiology, psychology, social work, health studies, sociology, biology, or a health professional degree .

Application Deadline: March 31

For further information, please contact:

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Download the brochure at: <http://www2.uregina.ca/cah/>

