

NCOHR Team Building Workshop: Supporting Multidisciplinary Inquiry into the oral health of Elders (SMILE)

On March 29th and 30th, 2016, a workshop was held in Waterloo Ontario in collaboration with the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA) to facilitate the development of a new, collaborative interdisciplinary team to respond to the “Reduce health inequalities of vulnerable populations” and “Promote health and reduce the burden of chronic disease” priorities identified by the Network for Canadian Oral Health Research and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. This workshop was co-lead by Drs Minn Yoon and Michael MacEntee in partnership with Ms. Mary-Lou Van der Horst. The *objectives* of this workshop were:

- (1) **Team Building** – Establish a new multi-disciplinary team and outline key roles for team members;
- (2) **Research Grant Development** – Integrate relevant considerations for senior’s oral health from key stakeholders into a research protocol addressing the gap in our ability to translate knowledge about oral health practices specific to LTC.

A new international interdisciplinary team was assembled from the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging, Schlegel Villages (long-term care homes), University of Waterloo, University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, University of Iowa, University of Otago, and McGill University (see Appendix A for full list of attendees) to develop a research agenda addressing the gap in our ability to translate knowledge about oral health practices specific to LTC. This research agenda will be submitted to the March 2017 Canadian Institutes of Health Research Project competition.

This international, multidisciplinary team has extensive knowledge about aging and older people and included researchers, trainees and knowledge users from medicine, dentistry, rehabilitation medicine, nutrition, and nursing. The RIA is a charitable, non-profit foundation, which promotes the integration of research, education and practice to enhance care and quality of life for older adults. The RIA is in the newly developed Centre of Excellence for Innovation in Aging directly connected to a 192 resident long-term care home located on the University of Waterloo campus. This strategic partnership with the RIA enabled our workshop to discuss practice-relevant oral health research and to engage with key knowledge users in developing our research agenda that is feasible in the long-term care environment. By directly engaging long-term care staff during this workshop, we ensured that our research priorities respond to the needs relevant to this setting. Several Schlegel Villages long-term care clinical staff actively participated in this workshop, which enabled the development and refinement of our research questions for the research proposal to be submitted to CIHR.

The first evening of the workshop began with a presentation from Dr. Mike Sharratt, President, Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging and a tour of the Centre of Excellence for Innovation in Aging. This was followed by a networking dinner and a presentation from Dr. Minn Yoon on a pathway of oral care model. This model guided the discussion and research question development of day 2.

Following a round of introductions from all participants, Day 2 began with Drs MacEntee, Ettinger and Thomson each providing a 15 minute presentation. These presentations focused on the state of oral health research in their respective countries, to provide an international context for the workshop discussions. This was followed by an open forum of sharing where knowledge users in attendance presented current initiatives in their institutions and their experiences with oral care of older adults.

Dr. Yoon then introduced the fishbone diagram process to the full group and attendees broke out into 4 sub-groups to participate in facilitated discussions corresponding to the four categories of the pathway of oral care model (assessment; prevention; treatment; communication). After 2 rounds of discussion,

each table presented their discussion results to the full group. This generated further questions and discussion. It is worth noting that the overwhelming focus of this discussion was on putting the resident in the centre of the research by identifying the oral health priorities and preferences of the residents themselves. Driving this focus on the resident was the five personal support workers (PSWs) who were in attendance at the meeting. PSWs are the direct care providers in long-term care, and provide a unique perspective on the daily care provided to residents in long-term care.

In the afternoon, the team began by discussing 10 key areas for research focus. Each participant was asked to rank their top 3 choices. The three priority areas identified by the group were:

1. Understanding the oral care preferences and priorities of all stakeholder groups at different points in time
2. Understanding the context and consequences of care
3. Understanding communication pathways to address the individual needs of residents

The team spent the remaining portion of the day discussing the design and methodology of the proposed research project. These discussions included: defining participants; defining methodological approach and research design; discussing timelines; and discussing pilot data collection sites.

Next steps for this team include development of a manuscript based on workshop outcomes, completion of pilot data collection and development of a grant application for the March 2017 CIHR Project competition.

Acknowledgments:

We would like to acknowledge the Network for Canadian Oral Health Research for funding this team building workshop. We thank the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging for partnering in this initiative and providing space, support and expertise to allow this collaborative workshop to be a success. We would also like to thank all workshop participants who traveled from far and near. In particular, we appreciate the participation of the clinical staff from Schlegel Villages for sharing their hands-on experiences and unique perspectives on oral health in long-term care.



Appendix A

Workshop Attendees

Paul Allison	McGill University
Brendan Bedard	Village of St. Clair
Jackie Borrie	Dental Hygienist
Michael Borrie	University of Western Ontario
Arlynn Brodie	University of Alberta
Lora Bruyn Martin	Schlegel Villages
Deborah Carr	Rutgers University/Gerontological Society of America
Sharon Compton	University of Alberta
Corinna Derdaele	Village of St. Clair
Hilary Dunn	Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging
Ron Ettinger	University of Iowa
Natalie Hall	Village of St. Clair
Matthias Hoben	University of Alberta
Carla Ickert	University of Alberta
Heather Keller	Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging
Nadia Kobagi	University of Alberta
Teresa Lee	Bruyere Centre for Learning, Research and Innovation
Ibo MacDonald	RNAO LTC Best Practices Coordinator
Michael MacEntee	University of British Columbia
Lynda McKeown	Dental Hygienist
Ashwini Namasivayam	University of Toronto/Toronto Rehabilitation Institute
Helen Niezgod	Bruyere Centre for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care
Melanie Pereira	Schlegel Villages
Michelle Quick-Fateux	Village of St. Clair
Mike Sharratt	Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging
Jennifer Sherwood	Village at University Gates
Murray Thomson	University of Otago
Mary-Lou van der Horst	Schlegel Centre for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care
Shaun Watson	Village of St. Clair
Minn Yoon	University of Alberta