

HSA members lead health care innovation

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HSA health science professionals dominated the field at the 2015 Providence Health Care research challenge

The research challenge, now in its fifth year, supports evidence-based innovation to improve patient care. It provides point of care health care workers with no formal research experience an opportunity to conduct research to inform their work in patient care, and ultimately to influence practice.

Providence Health Care developed the research challenge in 2011. The challenge was developed in partnership with the University of British Columbia (UBC) school of nursing. This year, HSA provided funding for the challenge and, of the 15 research groups, nine included health science professionals on the research teams.

HSA President Val Avery said the funding provided by HSA helps support members motivated to improve the quality of the care they provide.

"HSA members are lifelong learners. This research initiative helps provide information, mentorship, and funding to facilitate our members actively working to improve the delivery of patient care for populations with increasingly complex care needs and in an environment where health care professionals are constantly pushed to do more with less," she said.

Two research groups, one from Mount St. Joseph's, and the other from St. Vincent's Langara, focused on an issue near and dear to many health science professionals' interests - the success of interdisciplinary teams' practice; one from the patient's perspective, and the other from the team's perspective.

At Mount St. Joseph's the research team of social workers Teresa Robitaille, Stephanie Lam, Julia Peirce, occupational therapist Mary Lau, and registered nurse Christine Lipus, focuses on identifying interdisciplinary discharge planning interventions for frail older adults. The goal of this research is to help facilitate more targeted interventions for older adults in acute care, thereby reducing unnecessary re-admissions to hospital, decreasing length of stay, and improving patient and family experience in acute and community transitions.

The St. Vincent's Langara research team includes physiotherapist Anne Leclerc, dietitian Kit Chan, occupational therapist Karen Pott, cardiology technologist Annes Song, and spiritual health leader Chris Bernard. Their research project is an exploratory study to understand interdisciplinary care team stress related to the dying process of long-term care residents. The study comes out of staff reporting they have insufficient time and resources to deliver safe, compassionate, and ethical care, and not having sufficient knowledge to support families of more frail residents who require increasing complexity of care.

Several other research teams include participation from health science professionals.

- Physiotherapist Ellen Woo teamed up with nurses to look at early mobilization in the intensive care unit at St. Paul's Hospital.
- Physiotherapists Colleen Budzinski, Ashley Plough, Rachel Tutte, Stacey Prodaniuk and occupational

therapist Stacey Prodaniuk are on a team examining use or non-use of lower limb prosthesis in older adults with amputations following inpatient prosthesis training at Holy Family Hospital.

- Dietitians Russell Friesen, Kathy Ho, Jenn Messina and Alena Spears from St. Paul's Hospital are working to determine whether people living with HIV and have interactions with the hospital have adequate protein intake.
- Another team of dietitians including Kay McQueen, Karin Mornin, and Shauna Ratner are focusing their research on determining the feasibility of following the Mediterranean/Predimed diet for patients attending the Healthy Heart Program at St Paul's Hospital.
- Also from St. Paul's Hospital, the research team of social workers Joanne Schwartz, Alison Rowe, Alison Barret and Linda Wu are looking into why patients affiliated with community mental health teams continue to present at Emergency, with a view to improving integration of community and hospital-based mental health services.
- Social worker Deborah Ong-Lum and dietitian Michiyo Upton at St. Paul's Hospital teamed up to look at getting dialysis patients active by looking at the feasibility of implementing an intradialytic pedal exercise program for hemodialysis patients at East Vancouver Community Dialysis unit.
- Jasmine Parbhu, a social worker at Holy Family Hospital, is on a research team evaluating the effectiveness of a volunteer-based falls prevention strategy in residential care.

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