

Fall 2006

## Special points of interest:

- **Meet your Health executive**
- **2006 CPA Conference highlights**
- **Update on other Health-Psychology related Societies**



Calgary in Fall

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# Health Notes

## Meet Your New Health Section Executive

By LINDA CARLSON

**Dr. Tavis Campbell, Incoming Chair:** Dr. Campbell is an Assistant Professor in the Clinical Psychology program at the University of Calgary. He is an Associate Editor for the Journal of Behavioral Medicine and a member of the Adherence subdivision of the Canadian Hypertension Education Program.

Dr. Campbell's research interests include studying the interplay of life stress, genetic predisposition, diet and exercise in the development of high blood pressure and autonomic nervous system dysfunction and their role in such problems as hypertension/cardiovascular disease.

As chair of the Health Section, Dr. Campbell aims to encourage membership and active participation of our members through new initiatives described in this newsletter. Special emphasis will be placed on bringing former members back to our section.

## Message from the Outgoing Chair

By SHERRY STEWART

It has been a pleasure serving as Chair of the Health section. Over the past three years, I have watched the section grow to be very active and dynamic. We currently have 195 full and 54 student members.

Our packed program at the 2006 Calgary convention included a poster session, one symposium, five theory reviews, two conversation sessions and two workshops.

**Dr. Sherry Stewart, Treasurer, Outgoing Chair** (see message below): Dr. Stewart is Professor of Psychiatry, Psychology and Community Health and Epidemiology, CIHR Investigator and Killam Research Professor, Department of Psychology, Dalhousie University. Dr. Stewart has been involved on the Health Section executive for 3 Years and has helped raise our profile and increase membership.

**Dr. Kim Lavoie, Secretary:** Dr. Lavoie is Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology, UQAM and Director of Behavioral Medicine Research Center, Hôpital du Sacré-Coeur. Her research focuses on how psychological and behavioral factors contribute to the development and progression of chronic disease, including cardiovascular disease, asthma and occupational asthma.

**Dr. Linda Carlson, Communications:** Dr.

Carlson is Associate Professor in the Department of Oncology at the University of Calgary. Her research interests in psycho-oncology include studying mind-body medicine, meditation and yoga, evaluating psychological interventions, quality of life measurement and smoking cessation.

As communications chair of the Health Section, Dr. Carlson is the Newsletter Editor and aims to update the Division's website with information and interactive elements in the upcoming year.

Student representatives are Laura VanWielingen and Brenda Key, both at the University of Calgary.



Drs. Stewart, Carlson, Campbell and Lavoie

We also organized a paper session featuring top Canadian health psychology students and sponsored a well-attended social.

Our section hosted Drs. Gordon Asmundson and John Berry, in collaboration with the Clinical and International/Cross-Cultural sections, respectively, as CPA invited speakers. A summary of Dr. Asmundson's keynote address on health anxiety appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

We set up two new awards – student and new researcher – both of which are described in articles in this newsletter. We have maintained the section listserv to support section-relevant communications and have begun this newsletter.

As you can see, it has been a very exciting year for the section! I look forward to continuing as treasurer.

- Sherry Stewart, Outgoing Chair

## It's Not All in the Head: Asmundson on Health Anxiety

By SHERRY STEWART

The Health and Clinical sections were fortunate to have Dr. Gordon Asmundson as invited speaker at the 2006 Annual Convention.

Dr. Asmundson began his keynote address by defining health anxiety as anxiety that occurs when people sense that their physical well-being is threatened. He discussed the nature of the various 'health anxiety disorders' - a spectrum of conditions ranging from mild abridged hypochondriasis (e.g.,

disease phobia) to full-blown hypochondriasis and even more severe presentations (e.g., delusional disorder - somatic type).

Dr. Asmundson reviewed that health anxiety disorders affect between 5-10% of the population, often present as part of other Axis I disorders, and place considerable burden on the health care system, leading to unnecessary medical consultations and potentially harmful medical tests. He outlined the current state-of-the-art regarding mechanisms underlying the health anxiety disorders (e.g.,

learning mechanisms, genetics) and highlighted recent empirically-based advances in assessment and treatment (e.g., CBT).

General tactics and challenges in treatment were illustrated using engaging videotaped case examples that were role-played by his trainees. Dr. Asmundson managed to provide both the novice student and the seasoned scientist-practitioner useful information for understanding and treating these interesting conditions at the intersection of the health and clinical psychology fields.



**Melzack student award nominees**

## New Ron Melzack Health Section Student Award

By LINDA CARLSON

The Health Section this year launched the Ron Melzack Student Award for the best student research presentation at the Annual Conference. Students at the undergraduate, masters and PhD level are eligible. The award is named in honour of a great Canadian Health Psychology Researcher, Dr. Ron Melzack of McGill University, who was pleased to have his name associ-

ated with the award, even though he could not be present to award it this year.

The process worked this way: a short list of the top ten abstracts was chosen from the scores given by abstracts reviewers for the annual conference. Six of the ten were for oral talks, so those were grouped together in a symposium of the "Best and Brightest". Three others were poster presentations, and one was a theory review.

Each of the top ten presentations was evaluated by two different judges without conflict of interest across a range of criteria, and scores were averaged between judges. There were a number of students who scored very highly, and the competition was tight.

This process will be followed for the next competition at the 2007 Annual Conference in Ottawa, so students, be sure to submit your work!

"Our  
students are  
some of the best  
in the world—  
the quality of  
presentations  
was excellent."  
- T. Campbell

## Ron Melzack Student Award Winner 2006

by TAVIS CAMPBELL

The winner of the 2006 Ronald Melzack student award is Fabijana Jakulj of the University of Calgary for her project entitled, *"A High Fat Meal Significantly Increases Cardiovascular Reactivity to Psychological Stress."*

This study, conducted for her honours thesis under the supervision of Dr. Tavis Campbell, evaluated the impact of a single high fat (relative to low fat) meal on

physiological responses to a series of stressful laboratory tasks.

Her findings indicated that blood pressure responses to public speaking, a math exam and immersion of the hand in ice water were exaggerated if participants had eaten a meal from a popular fast-food restaurant.

Fabijana enthusiastically described the results of her study at an outstanding and highly attended student symposium at the Calgary

conference this past June.

Having successfully completed her undergraduate degree, Fabijana plans to continue pursuing her interest in diet and is currently enrolled in the University of Alberta's School of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Students can enter the Ron Melzack award competition in 2007 by submitting an abstract to the health section at the upcoming CPA call for Abstracts.



**Fabijana Jakulj receiving Ron Melzack award from Dr. Stewart**

## Survival of the Fittest: Self-care Tips for Students

by LAURA VANWIELINGEN  
and BRENDA KEY

It seems logical that psychology students must prioritize their own well-being, but achieving balance between academic pursuits and personal lives is easier said than done. Graduate students experience numerous stressors including acute time pressures, evaluation from multiple sources, financial pressures, competition among peers, disrupted personal lives, and a potential loss of ideals. It is common for students to push themselves to accomplish their

goals and this can take a toll on their physical and emotional well-being. A key factor in the maintenance of health and prevention of illness is ensuring that you take time for self-care. Here are some quick self-care tips for students:

- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a regular sleep schedule
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Set aside time for family and friends
- Participate in activities you enjoy
- Develop a realistic vision of the way you want to "be" in the world

- Know your limits and accept these limitations
- Share your fears and doubts with fellow students, or mentors. Seek personal psychotherapy or counselling

A commitment to personal well-being may help students achieve their academic goals, and maximize therapeutic benefit to clients. Optimally, students will develop self-awareness of and respect for personal needs, and will adopt self-care strategies that will serve them in the future, both personally and professionally.



**Health Section members at CPA Social**

## New Health Section Early Career Award for 2007

By TAVIS CAMPBELL and KIM LAVOIE

The Health section of CPA is pleased to announce a call for nominations for the **Early Career Award** for Contributions to Health Psychology.

This award is intended to highlight the contributions of Canadian Health Psychologists by identifying individuals who, early in their career, have contributed

significantly to the field of health psychology in Canada and internationally and have shown substantial promise of continued meritorious academic accomplishments.

Nominees must be fewer than 10 years post-PhD, or for those with post-doctoral training, fewer than 10 years past completion of their post-doc.

The winner will be invited to present the research for which the

award was given during the CPA annual meeting.

Any person may self-nominate or nominate another individual.

Please send a letter of intent describing contributions to health psychology (maximum 2 pages) and updated CV by November 15th to:

Tavis Campbell  
(t.s.campbell@ucalgary.ca).

"We want  
to highlight  
the achievements  
of our excellent  
researchers"  
- K. Lavoie



**More socializing at Health Section wine and cheese**

## News from Health Psychology-Oriented Societies

By KIM LAVOIE

There are several international scientific societies that members of the Health Psychology section of CPA may want more information about. Their memberships include some of the world's top scholars in the areas of health psychology and behavioral medicine, and annual meetings provide a stimulating and enriching environment for discovery, exchange, and networking. For more information, read on...

**The American Psychosomatic Society (APS)**, founded in 1942, is a worldwide community of scholars and clinicians dedicated to the study of the interaction of mind, brain, body and the social environment and on scientific understanding of how each contributes to the pathogenesis, course and treatment of disease.

*Psychosomatic Medicine*, founded in 1939, is the official publication of the APS and publishes both experimental and clinical studies

dealing with behavioral biology, psychiatry, psychology, physiology, anthropology and clinical medicine.

Their 65th Annual Scientific Conference will be held from March 7-10<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at the Budapest Hilton in Budapest, Hungary. The theme of this year's meeting is *Frontiers in Psychosomatic Medicine: From Bench to Bedside to Community*.

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## CPA Health Section

CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION HEALTH SECTION  
NEWSLETTER

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## Help Make our Section Better

by TAVIS CAMPBELL

Under Sherry Stewart's leadership, last year the Executive began a process of long-range planning. In this and subsequent issues of the newsletter we will be featuring descriptions of some of the initiatives we have been working on. One of the important areas concerns membership, and we are striving to increase the size, age distribution and professional background of our members. If you are interested in becoming involved in the section or contributing to this newsletter in the future, please send an e-mail to the current chair, Tavis Campbell (t.s.campbell@ucalgary.ca). We are interested to learn your thoughts.

In the meantime, we look forward to another excellent year and an outstanding meeting in Ottawa, June 7-9, 2007.

CPA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2007 (Ottawa June 7-9)  
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS—DUE November 15, 2006

## Health-Oriented Society News (continued)



Enjoying the Health section social

The Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM), founded in 1978, is a multidisciplinary organization of clinicians, educators, and scientists dedicated to promoting the study of the interactions of behavior with biology and the environment and the application of that knowledge to improve the health and well being of individuals, families, communities and populations. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* is the official publication of the SBM, and covers a wide variety of topics related to psychophysiology and behavioral medicine interventions. Their 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting will be held from March 21-24th, 2007, at the Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, DC. The theme of this year's

meeting is *Science to Impact: The Breadth of Behavioral Medicine*. SBM is an excellent venue for young scholars to present their work, network and explore the diversity this conference (and society) has to offer. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.sbm.org/#>.

The American Psychological Association's (APA) Division of Health Psychology, or Division 38, is the American version of the Health Psychology section of the CPA. Division 38 was established to facilitate collaboration among psychologists and other health science and health care professionals interested in the psychological and behavioral aspects of physical and mental health. Its

website provides both scientific and professional information on a broad range of topics that may be of interest to scholars in health psychology. For more information, please visit <http://www.health-psych.org/>. Particularly useful is Division 38's "resources" page which provides links to general health pages (e.g., National Institutes of Health), relevant psychology and medicine links (e.g., American Psychological Association, American Medical Association) and various society links (including the two societies mentioned above). To access these resources and many others, please visit <http://www.health-psych.org/resources.php>.