

Winter 2010

**Special points of interest:**

- New Behavioral Medicine Research Center
- Health Psychology at Ryerson University
- 2009 Ronald Melzack Research Summary
- Upcoming Conferences

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# Health Notes

## Message from the Chair

by TAVIS CAMPBELL, Ph. D.

As I write this note from the University of Calgary on a snowy December afternoon, I am struck by the number of hand sanitizer stations and posted directives on hand washing and flu immunization clinics. No matter where you live in Canada, public health officials are making highly concerted efforts to convince Canadians of the need to make preventative efforts to control the H1N1 flu pandemic. At the same time, a vocal minority of internet web sites and opinion pieces published in the media question the safety and effectiveness of vaccines and adjuvant. This is reminiscent of shocking reports of parents who refuse to have their children vaccinated against infectious childhood diseases due to the mistaken belief that this protects them from developing autism.

Faith-based concerns have also been raised over the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine.

In general, concerns regarding vaccination highlight a potential role for health psychologists in encouraging immunization efforts. It will not be surprising to most of you that psychological factors including perceived dangers, doubts around medical claims, inability to estimate dangerousness and perceptions regarding ability to protect have all been associated with reduced uptake. These difficulties surrounding immunization are unlikely to be completely resolved through traditional efforts aimed solely at education without attempting to address the ambivalence experienced when there is the potential for negative effects, even if this is limited to some temporary discomfort.

Armed with a wealth of knowledge regarding health behavior change, Health Psychologists can contribute significantly to designing and evaluating state-of-the-art methods to maximize immunization uptake.

A symposium bearing on some of these issues entitled, "The Politics of Health Information" is being sponsored by the Departments of Exercise and Journalism at Concordia University on March 5th, 2010.



## New Behavioral Medicine Research Center: Introducing the Montreal Behavioral Medicine Center (MBMC)

by KIM LAVOIE, Ph.D.

A new behavioral medicine research center has recently been established in Montreal, the Montreal Behavioral Medicine Center (MBMC). It brings together a group of researchers from across the city of Montreal to assess how psychological and behavioral factors influence the development and progression of chronic diseases including cardiovascular diseases, lung diseases, and cancer.

The MBMC, founded by Dr. Simon Bacon, Assistant Professor of Exercise Science at Concordia University, will soon move to the newly constructed

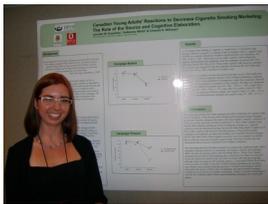
PERFORM (Prevention, Evaluation, Rehabilitation, and Formation) Center, a state-of-the-art research, training, and community center focusing on the importance of behavioral factors in the prevention and treatment of chronic disease. The PERFORM Centre will be constructed alongside the existing athletics complex at the Loyola Campus of Concordia University, and ground breaking is slated for February 2010.

Dr. Bacon, along with two other researchers from his department at Concordia University were recently awarded a \$34 million dollar Knowledge Infrastructure Grant from the Minister of Economic Development,

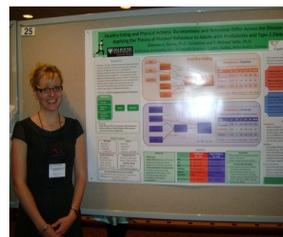
Innovation and Export of the Canadian and Quebec governments, to build this state-of-the-art facility.

It is hoped that the establishment of such a Centre will attract bright young scholars from diverse fields (including psychology, physiology/physiotherapy, behavioral sciences, medicine, nutrition, exercise science, among others) to both train and conduct research aimed at the prevention of chronic disease and the promotion of health and well-being.

For more information, please contact Dr. Simon Bacon at [simon.bacon@concordia.ca](mailto:simon.bacon@concordia.ca).



Jennifer Kowalsky presenting her poster at the Montreal convention



Shannon Currie, winner of the 2009 Ronald Melzack Award for best student presentation

## One of Canada's Newest Psychology Graduate Programs: Health Psychology at Ryerson University

by TREVOR A. HART, Ph.D. & ANNE C. WAGNER

In Spring 2007, a new MA and PhD program in psychology at Ryerson University, received provincial approval. With our third incoming cohort of MA students, and our first cohort of PhD students entering the program, Ryerson University's graduate program offers two fields of study: Clinical Psychology and Psychological Science. Both areas of emphasis offer multiple opportunities to engage in health psychology research at the graduate level. Faculty in health psychology are currently conducting studies funded by CIHR, SSHRC, the National Institutes of Health (USA), the Lance Armstrong Foundation, the Tema Center Memorial Trust, the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO, the Canadian Foundation for AIDS

Research, and the Ontario HIV Treatment Network.

Research topics in health psychology currently being studied in the Department include:

- Sociocultural Barriers to Women's Participation in Exercise and Sport
- Personality and Individual Difference Predictors of Women's Body Image Disturbance
- Coping with Chronic Disease
- Relationship Dynamics Among Couples In Which One Partner Has a Chronic Disease
- Cognitive Vulnerability to Insomnia
- The Role of Insomnia in Depression
- HIV Prevention Among High Risk Populations (Gay and Bisexual Men, Youth from Disadvantaged Backgrounds)
- Medical Care and Quality of

Life Among HIV-Positive Individuals

- Constructions of Gender, Identity and Sexuality
- Stress Among Emergency Medical Personnel

Our new psychology graduate program is a part of a tremendous expansion in research and graduate studies across Ryerson University. The graduate program is ideal for prospective graduate students who wish to learn how to conduct rigorous, applied research in health psychology and other fields of psychology.

For more information, please see [www.ryerson.ca/psychology/graduate](http://www.ryerson.ca/psychology/graduate) or contact the Director of Graduate Studies in Psychology, Dr. Martin Antony, at [mantony@psych.ryerson.ca](mailto:mantony@psych.ryerson.ca)

## Research Summary for 2009 Ronald Melzack Award

by SHANNON CURRIE

Building upon my clinical and research interests in chronic disease management, in my dissertation I employed the Theory of Planned Behaviour to explore predictors of healthy eating (HE) and physical activity (PA) in the diabetes population. I was particularly interested in exploring whether predictors of these essential health behaviours differed across the disease course; namely for persons at-risk for diabetes (i.e., prediabetes) compared to those with type 2 diabetes. Patients recruited from a Diabetes Management Centre (Prediabetes  $N = 117$ ; Diabetes  $N = 122$ ) completed a survey (time 1) and follow-up behavioural assessment via telephone one month later (time 2). Path analyses and multiple group comparisons supported the use

of the TPB in the diabetes population and also revealed significant differences in behavioural predictors between subgroups.

For prediabetes, perceived confidence/control and demographics (i.e., female and older age) predicted HE behaviour. Although perceived confidence/control predicted PA intent, the only predictor of PA behaviour was perceived enjoyment. Clinically, these findings suggest that the influence of gender and age on HE should be considered, and that bolstering confidence/control (e.g., education, identifying barriers) for both HE and PA in this at-risk population is essential. In addition, collaboratively identifying enjoyable physical activities is important.

Regarding diabetes, positive

attitudes predicted HE intent but the only predictor of HE behaviour was perceptions of what important others think. Consistent with what diabetes patients report clinically, this finding emphasizes the importance of including family and friends in diabetes education to help to foster the norm of HE. For PA, perceived enjoyment and confidence/control predicted intent, and intent in turn predicted PA behaviour, suggesting that helping patients with diabetes to strengthen intention implementations (e.g., goal-setting) is important.

I am completing my pre-doctoral internship training in the Health/Rehabilitation track at the London Clinical Psychology Consortium and I look forward to pursuing and broadening my research and clinical experiences in health psychology.



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Editorial Office:  
Psychosocial Resources  
2202 Second St. SW  
Calgary, Alberta T2S 3C1

Phone: 403-355-3209  
Fax: 403-355-3206  
E-mail: l.carlson@ucalgary.ca



## Help Make our Section Better

by TAVIS CAMPBELL, Ph.D.

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 at t.s.campbell@ucalgary.ca.

We look forward to another excellent year and hope to see you in Winnipeg, June 3-5, 2010.

**CPA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2010 (Winnipeg June 3-5)  
REGISTER NOW AT: [www.cpa.ca/convention](http://www.cpa.ca/convention)**

## Upcoming 2010 Conferences: APS in Portland and SBM in Seattle

by LINDA CARLSON, Ph.D.

The American Psychosomatic Society is hosting their annual conference in Portland Oregon on March 10-14, 2010. The theme this year is "Stress and Health" which fits nicely with a lot of the research we are doing in the CPA Health Division. One of the keynote speakers will be our 2008 Early Career Award winner Dr. Linda Carlson. Topics covered include: Stress: Theory and Measurement; Stress management and intervention; Individual differences in stress perception and reactivity; Stress and reproductive function; Stress and functional somatic syndromes / somatoform disorders.

Go to [www.psychosomatic.org](http://www.psychosomatic.org) for more details.

The Society for Behavioral Medicine will host their annual meeting in Seattle, WA from April 7-10, 2010. The theme of the conference is "Behavioral Medicine: Building for the Future," and will have talks and activities related to new technology, basic and new knowledge, health disparities, and career and mentoring activities. Last year's SBM conference in Montreal was a great success.

Go to [www.sbm.org](http://www.sbm.org) for details.



Maryann Joseph and her supervisor, Dr. Kim Lavoie, at the Montreal Convention