



Issue 10
Fall 2007

Centre on Aging and Health (CAH)

Newsletter

Michelle Bourgault-Fagnou
Newsletter Editor
Email: bournich@uregina.ca

University of Regina Graduate Students Attend the Canadian Institutes on Health Research Summer Program

Story by Amanda Lints-Martindale, M.A.

Two students from the Gerontology Program at the University of Regina, Nana Bonsu and Maureen Coulthard, were selected to attend the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Summer Program in Aging conference. This event, sponsored by the British Columbia Network on Aging Research (BCNAR) alongside the Institute of Aging (CIHR) was held on June 4-7, 2007, at Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia.

This annual program offers advanced training to trainees at the M.A., Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral levels. The goals of the program are provide experience in grant preparation and the peer review process. The program also aims to increase understanding of research in aging and the communication of results. Finally, it allows students to network with mentors and other young researchers interested in aging from across the country.

The majority of the learning takes place in small sessions, which Bonsu found helpful. "I really enjoyed the setup of the presentations, which consisted of small group workshops,

and panel discussions, which included all of the delegates." he said. "Having the small group workshops allowed us, the delegates, to feel more comfortable, and more willing to express our thoughts and feelings on certain topics."

To be eligible to attend the conference, individuals must be full-time graduate students or post-doctoral fellows at a Canadian university, interested in aging research, a Canadian citizen, and may not have attended a previous summer program funded by CIHR.

"I would definitely recommend that other students interested in the study of gerontology try to participate in this annual program," says Bonsu. "It is very informative, worthwhile, and all the information you receive will always be applicable in your academic career." The 2008 Summer Program in Aging will be held from June 2-5, 2008 in Ontario. For further information on the program, go to the following website: <http://www.cihr-rsc.gc.ca/e/30408.html>.

Inside this issue:

U of R Graduate Students Attend CIHR Summer Program in Aging	1
Completing the Circle: End of Life Care with Aboriginal Families	2
Letter to the Editor	2
U of R SEC Celebrates 30 Years of Lifelong Learning	3
Research Participation Opportunity	4

The CAH Newsletter Submissions

The CAH newsletter is currently accepting submissions for the next issue. Your comments, suggestions, announcements, and CAH-related news items are most welcome.

Please address your submissions to...
 Michelle Bourgault,
 Editor
 Centre on Aging and Health Newsletter,
 Department of Psychology
 University of Regina
 Regina, SK S4S 0A2

PH: 585-5369

Submissions may also be emailed to:
 bourmich@uregina.ca

Completing the Circle: End of Life Care with Aboriginal Families

Dr. Mary Hampton, Professor of Psychology, Luther College, University of Regina and a research faculty member of the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, and the Community Psychology Research Team have been working collaboratively with Aboriginal researchers and Elders, as well as numerous community-based service agencies, on the project "Completing the Circle: End of Life Care with Aboriginal Families." Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, the objectives of the project are to enhance health care workers' awareness of end of life care needs of Aboriginal families, to increase Aboriginal families' awareness of the available end of life care services, and to increase their access to palliative care services.

To educate health care providers about culturally appropriate end-of-life care for Aboriginal families, the group produced a curriculum package which includes a 23 minute video, PowerPoint presentation, and lecture material for a presentation on culturally sensitive and appropriate protocol for Aboriginal families. They also developed fact sheets that will be distributed to people who attend presentations, as well as widely distributed to health care and service providers in hospitals and community agencies. To increase Aboriginal families' awareness of end of life services, they produced a video which contains messages from Elders to help families deal with end of life care for loved ones.

This research has garnered national interest for its' successful collaboration with Aboriginal Elders. A workshop, held September 19th in Saskatoon,
(Continued on page 4)

Letter to the Editor

Greetings,

I'm just sending a word of appreciation for including the article about the "New Executive Director for the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism" on page 3 of the Winter edition of the CAH Newsletter. The SSM is a great example of the way organizations can work together to achieve common goals. Bev indeed brings tremendous management and communication skills to the

Executive Director position. Together with Lynne Couzens, they accomplish a great deal by way of achieving the mutual understanding and synergy that is so essential to this type of organization. Thanks also for directing attention to the conference at the end of May. It's always encouraging to read about the good things that are happening.

Sincerely,
 Trev Quinn

University of Regina Seniors Education Centre Celebrates 30 Years of Lifelong Learning

Story by Kerrie Strathy, Seniors Education Centre

The University of Regina Seniors Education Centre (SEC) has been providing lifelong learning programs within a supportive environment for individuals 55 years of age and over since 1977 when a group of older adults first approached the University Extension, now known as the Centre for Continuing Education. That summer the SEC offered four courses for seniors. Now, approximately 180 courses are offered each year with no prior formal education required, no assignments or exams, and most have no homework. SEC programs are very popular because they stimulate the intellectual, emotional and physical well-being of older adults in order to enrich their lives and enhance their well-being.

Older adults who participate in SEC programs have many reasons to learn. Some want to study subjects they find interesting, continue their personal development, make up for opportunities that they missed when they were young, or learn for the pleasure of learning. Others simply want to keep mentally active. Those who continue to stimulate their minds through lifelong learning programs report many benefits including increased quality of life, enhanced self esteem, reduced social isolation, better ability to maintain independence, and greater sense of overall well-being.

Have you ever heard the old adage, "Use it or lose it"? People who are involved in older adult learning programs know that continuing

education has a positive impact on their overall health and well-being. While some people think that health relates to physical activity, others know it is equally true when it comes to maintaining your mind or cognitive function. Recent research suggests that if the mind continues to be stimulated and challenged, it will continue to grow and develop throughout life. This contributes to the retention of literacy skills needed to cope in our ever changing world.

The most recent International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) revealed that only 12% of Canadians over the age of 65 have health literacy skills considered to be adequate. This is a very serious situation since nine out of ten seniors report taking at least one medication according to the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) Report on Learning in Canada 2007. The CCL report suggests that "Potential solutions include improving seniors' literacy skills and finding better ways to communicate information to them."

The SEC provides a wide range of programs including art, belly dancing, digital photography, history, writing, storytelling and more. The SEC also provides opportunities for older adults to learn or improve their English or improve their reading and writing skills. The greatest risk to seniors with low literacy and/or English language skills is making mistakes with medication. "At Risk: A Socio-Economic Analysis of Health and

CAH Membership

Those interested in joining the CAH may complete the application form available online at the CAH website or request an application form from Dr. Gordon Asmundson, Membership Committee Chair.

Please mail applications to:
Dr. Gordon Asmundson,
Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies,
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina, SK
S4S 0A2

Completing the Circle: End of Life Care with Aboriginal Families *(cont. from page 2)*

brought together an interdisciplinary group of 30 researchers and students working in the area of Aboriginal End Life Care, cancer, and aging. Facilitated by elders, the goal of this workshop was to help researchers learn appropriate research methods for working with Aboriginal communities. On September 20th, the Quality End of Life Care Research Group hosted a telehealth education event for health care professionals and public at the

Saskatoon City Hospital. Dr. Linda Burhansstipanov, President and Grants Director of Native American Cancer Research Program at Pine, Colorado, an internationally recognized researcher in the area of Native American end of life research, delivered her lecture entitled "Lessons Learned From Community-based Participatory Research with Aboriginal Populations."

Dr. Hampton (Chair of the CAH

Cluster on Aboriginal issues in Aging and Health) and the research group have secured funding from CIHR to produce four more videos, which address issues such as bereavement issues of Aboriginal children and multiple losses that Aboriginal communities deal with. For more information, visit <http://www.spheru.ca> or visit the Community Psychology Research Team website at: <http://uregina.ca/~hamptoma/>.♦

University of Regina Seniors Education Centre Celebrates 30 Years of Lifelong Learning *(cont. from page 3)*

Literacy Amongst Seniors" estimates that up to 50% of seniors do not take medications as prescribed. The difficulty in reading or understanding instructions may be the cause of this problem, not lack of

compliance, which is often assumed to be the case.

The SEC will be holding its 6th Gerontology Institute ***Communicating With Care*** on November 15th in Regina. For

more information about this and other SEC programs please call 585-5816 or check our website at www.uregina.ca/cce/seniors.

Learning can add years to your life – and life to your years.♦

Research Participation Opportunity for Seniors Who Worry About Their Health

WHAT ARE WE STUDYING?

We are interested in testing some approaches to reduce worry and anxiety about health, while improving overall health and quality of life.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

People who are 65 years of age and older who worry about their health may be eligible to participate.

WHAT WILL PARTICIPANTS BE REQUIRED TO DO? Participants will be asked to take part six weekly individual meetings that last approximately 45 to 60

minutes each where they learn new ways for dealing with anxiety and worry. Participants will also be asked to complete several questionnaires.

HOW DO I LEARN MORE?

The study is being conducted by Michelle Bourgault-Fagnou (Doctoral Student in Clinical Psychology), Department of Psychology, University of Regina. The researchers would be happy to discuss this important opportunity further (Phone: 306-585-5369; E-mail: bournich@uregina.ca).♦

Centre on Aging and Health

University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina, Saskatchewan

Phone: (306) 337-2537
Fax: (306) 337-2321
Email: cah@uregina.ca

We're on the Web!

http://uregina.ca/hadjistt/centre_index.htm