IMHA - On the Move!

Greetings after a very long Canadian winter! As the earth finally thaws, we are spending April raising awareness of several very important items.

National Volunteer Week
First, April 6 to 12 is Canada’s National Volunteer Week. We could not allow it to go by without recognizing the invaluable contributions that many of you make, including our Institute Advisory Board members, our Research Ambassadors, and many others. You are responsible for IMHA’s success and for helping to make health research in Canada the best it can be. We would like to thank each of you personally for your commitment, advice, guidance, and collegiality throughout the past year. In appreciation of your many contributions, a most sincere ‘thank you’!

National Oral Health Month
April is also National Oral Health Month, with National Dental Hygienists Week falling April 6 to 12. Supporting research and knowledge translation activities for Oral Health is an important part of IMHA’s mandate. Oral health can affect a person’s entire body and quality of life. Past research supported by IMHA has found links between oral health and cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and many other serious health conditions. Research led by Dr. Mary McNally identified successful ways to translate oral health research to end-users and address gaps in oral health education of health care providers. We featured a story about her team’s research findings in Celebrating the Impact of Health Research and were fortunate to catch up with Dr. McNally this month to ask her about her work. IMHA is proud to support research across Canada that seeks to improve oral health and oral healthcare for Canadians. Our mouths are windows to our bodies and good oral health leads to good health and quality of life overall.

Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples
IMHA has recently become involved as a co-lead in an important initiative called Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples (Pathways). Because First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples’ health is so severely affected by a history of culture and language loss, racism and stigmatization, and a disconnect from Indigenous identity, they have been included as an at-risk segment of the population. CIHR has launched a 10-year, $25 million dollar initiative with an overall goal to develop an evidence base in how to design, offer and implement programs and policies that promote health and health equity in four priority areas for at-risk populations including Oral Health, besides Suicide, Diabetes & Obesity, and Tuberculosis. Publicly-funded Canadian health care largely excludes oral health services, and for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, access to oral health care is lessened by additional financial, geographical, cultural and social barriers. IMHA considers this initiative to be of utmost importance and is working hard to ensure affected communities can benefit from this work.

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Funding Opportunities and Research News

IMHA FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

For information on current funding opportunities, please visit IMHA’s Funding Opportunities online.

**Applied Public Health Chair**
The specific objectives of the Applied Public Health Chair are to:

- **Support** high quality programs of population health intervention research that contribute to new knowledge to improve health and health equity across the life course;
- **Stimulate** the application of innovative theories, methods and approaches in research and knowledge translation that promote reciprocal learning within and between countries;
- **Catalyze** interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral collaborations between researchers and knowledge users that contribute to evidence-informed decision-making and use of knowledge by public health and other sectors; and
- **Mentor** the current and next generation of population and public health researchers, practitioners and policy makers from a range of disciplines and sectors.

**IMHA will support applied public health chairs that are relevant to the oral Health in the North research area.**

Application deadline: May 1, 2014

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**Good News Story**

**Bone thrilling discoveries**

One of IMHA’s Institute Advisory Board members, Dr. Jeff Dixon, is solving his own Sherlock Holmes mystery. For more than two decades, Dr. Dixon, a professor in the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology and Schulich Dentistry, has been investigating how skeletal cells communicate with each other in order to control the formation and destruction of bone.

Two recent grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) are enabling Dr. Dixon and his team of outstanding graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and technical staff to look at how physical movement and exercise impact bone growth and the cellular mechanisms that cause this to happen.

When a skeletal cell is stimulated by exercise, it releases ATP and Dr. Dixon and his collaborators have shown that this ATP acts a signal to turn on osteoblasts, the cells that create new bone, and to turn off the osteoclasts, which are the cells that destroy the bone.

Please see the full story at the Schulich website to find out how the team’s discoveries may benefit people living with osteoporosis, which involves excessive bone loss. This research is supported by CIHR, Canada’s premier agency for health research, and has involved collaborators from Pfizer, one of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies.
Dr. Mary McNally is a philosopher with both feet firmly on the ground and a strong sense of purpose. An Associate Professor in the Faculty of Dentistry at Dalhousie University in Halifax, this dentist-researcher comes from a multidisciplinary educational background (Nutrition, General Pathology, Dental Surgery and Philosophy). With an interdisciplinary perspective, she has developed a research program that seeks pragmatic solutions and policy recommendations that address inequity and access to oral care. A summary of some successful outcomes of research projects for which she was Primary Investigator appeared as “The Inconvenient Tooth: Making Room for Influential Voices to Inform Research” in Celebrating the Impact of Health Research, published by CIHR-IMHA, and the Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN).
Working as a private clinician for nine years in rural Nova Scotia, McNally soon discovered many seniors presenting with abysmal mouth conditions. “It was absolutely transformational for me when I saw elderly patients who were wealthy Nova Scotia folk who may as well have been in the developing world in terms of what their mouth looked like,” she said.

Leaving private practice to teach full time, she was the first dentist to apply for a CIHR Training Grant in Interdisciplinary Primary Health Care Research (TUTOR-PHC) through which she gained valuable researcher training. Deeply interested in the social justice aspect of health care, she said, “It’s not enough to identify a moral issue – you have to respond to it.”

Some of the breakthroughs in the research recorded in “The Inconvenient Tooth” came about from “really paying attention to either the end knowledge users or the people who were impacted as opposed to academics talking to each other,” McNally explained. “Some things happened kind of naturally,” she said. The inspiration for one of her team’s major knowledge translation successes came up at a Brushing up on Mouth Care research team meeting with representatives from a community college when the question arose, “Why will caregivers change diapers but they won’t brush peoples’ teeth?” McNally recalled one woman saying, “They don’t have any chance to practice. They don’t have the tools.” McNally and her team immediately replied “Oh, well we can fix this.”

Brushing Up on Mouth Care is a best practices program of mouth care for three different audiences including long term care facilities, home support agencies, and educators of personal care providers. The Brushing Up website was launched in 2011 and according to a recent website usage report, has had about 9,700 unique visits from 78 different countries, primarily from Canada, the United States, and India, with many others from as far as Afghanistan, Bhutan, and Congo.

Funding Opportunities from The Arthritis Society

The Arthritis Society has new research funding opportunities available. Please email research@arthritis.ca with questions.

Training Graduate PhD Award (TGD): Submission Deadline Tuesday, May 13, 2014 at 4pm ET. Apply here.

Training Graduate Post-Doctoral Fellowship Award (TPF): Submission Deadline Tuesday, May 13, 2014 at 4pm ET. Apply here.
Do you have a story that has helped sustain health and enhance quality of life by eradicating the pain, suffering and disability caused by arthritis, musculoskeletal, oral and skin conditions? Are you planning an event that might be of interest to the IMHA community? Is your organization launching a funding opportunity? IMHA would like to celebrate our partners’ and stakeholders’ success stories, events, and funding opportunities in our monthly newsletter. Please make your submissions to IMHA@cihr-irsc.gc.ca. We look forward to sharing you information with the IMHA community!

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Meetings of Interest

**CIHR Media Training Webinar**
June 26 2:00-3:30 p.m. Eastern Time
Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis Trainees and Researchers are invited to participate in a Media Training Webinar. This 1.5-hour media training session, facilitated by CIHR media specialist David Coulombe, offers media relations tools and outreach strategies to help communicate more effectively with the media and maximize media outreach. The session is geared towards individuals with minimal media training experience. This session will be provided in English only, however the facilitator will answer questions in both official languages. Register here for this training session. Once you are approved by the host, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

Session Number: 558 716 180
Registration password:
This session does not require a registration password. Click here to view in other time zones or languages. For assistance, contact Amanda Devost at: amanda.devost@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

The Canadian Institute of Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) Forum 2014
November 24-26, Toronto
The Canadian Institute of Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) is now calling for Abstracts for its Forum taking place in Toronto, November 24-26, 2014. Deadline to apply is May 15, 2014. Forum themes include:
1. Mental health research and rehabilitation in active duty personnel, Veterans or families (with one session focusing on suicide research)
2. Physical health research and rehabilitation in active duty personnel, Veterans or families;
3. Social health and wellbeing of active duty personnel, Veterans or families;
4. Novel health technologies relevant to military service (focus on protection), working in an austere environment (eg. telemedicine, auto-diagnosis), and distance medicine and health care (eg. hand-held devices, robots)
5. Transition from military to civilian life;
6. Occupational Health, including, exposure, standards of care;
7. Gender differences in health.

**Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT)**
May 7-10, 2014 Fredericton, NB

**Outcome Measures in Rheumatology OMERACT**
May 7-11, 2014 Budapest, Hungary

**Global Summit on the Physical Activity of Children**
May 19-22, 2014 Toronto, ON