There is tremendous diversity and variability in the aged population, which is not always reflected in the current language of research, policy and practice. This presentation situates the aging of Canada’s population within an international context to expand awareness of the complexity of research on aging, and with it, the possibilities and challenges of developing and implementing interdisciplinary evidence-based research partnerships and collaborations. Implications of the heterogeneity of aging populations for health services and systems will be considered, along with multidisciplinary paradigms for thinking about aging. Reflections on the importance of recognizing the diversity and complexity of aging; the need for interdisciplinary research platforms, and practice and policy partnerships; and the benefits of creating linkages across existing projects and data systems conclude the presentation.

Presenter: Dr. Anne Martin-Matthews

Biography: Anne Martin-Matthews is a Professor of Sociology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. She has just completed two terms (2004-2011) as the Scientific Director of the national Institute of Aging of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Under her leadership, the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (a 20 year study of 50,000 Canadians aged 45 years and older) was launched in 2009, with key operational support from the CIHR. During her term, the Institute of Aging also developed strategic research initiatives in Cognitive Impairment, and in Mobility in Aging, and developed international funding partnerships with China, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom (through both the NDA and the EPSRC). Anne led the Institute to partnership as an associate member of the ERA-AGE2, and has participated in FUTURAGE consultations on Europe’s Roadmap for Research on Aging. She holds a PhD from McMaster University in Canada. She has conducted research on home care services to elderly clients in BC, Ontario and Nova Scotia. Her publications include Aging and Caring at the Intersection of Work and Home Life: Blurring the Boundaries (2008, with Judith Phillips), Widowhood in Later Life, three edited volumes (one on the research-policy interface) and over 150 scholarly papers on aging in family contexts, widowhood, social support, caregiving, and domiciliary health care services. Dr. Martin-Matthews is currently the President of the Research Committee on Aging of the International Sociological Association (2010-2014).