

Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

Fall 2018 Newsletter

Dementia...changing the story

As of today, there are over half a million Canadians living with dementia. Plus, according to the Alzheimer Society of Canada, about 25,000 new cases are diagnosed every year. There are few of us untouched by the condition as many of us have a family member with dementia or know a friend, co worker or a member of our community living with the condition.

These statistics can evoke fear throughout society because of the negative messaging that has become common—the cognitive deficits a person experiences and the stress and strain on care providers. Much of this fear results from a lack of understanding of dementia and a focus on the dementia/disease rather than the person living with the dementia. And this, unfortunately, can lead to stigma and unfounded assumptions about their capacity.

There is a movement underway to change the story about persons with dementia. The Canadian government has legislated that it will have a national dementia strategy by Fall 2019. Many attendees at a conference to inform the strategy were persons living with dementia. Most recently, a Bill of Rights for People with Dementia was passed as a way to mitigate the stigma and discrimination that people may face because of their dementia. The legislation is an important tool to

remind us all that people with dementia are *people first* and can continue to live well with this diagnosis, contribute to our communities, etc.

Through our research at the Centre, we are helping to advance the understanding that people can live well with dementia and our work helps to identify strategies to support those individuals caring for the person through his/her journey (e.g., education for care providers, Nova Scotia dementia strategy, supports for family caregivers).

In addition, a growing emphasis of our work is the authentic involvement of the person him/herself in the work. We do this in our research on long term care through the active participation of persons with dementia on advisory and/or working groups. Their contribution keeps the research relevant and I see first hand the importance of focusing on capacity rather than deficits and decline.

So what do you think of when you hear the word “dementia”? Don’t buy into the negative stereotypes. Rather, help change the story by supporting the notion that people with dementia can live well with dementia and be engaged and contributing members of our families and communities.



Dr. Janice Keefe
Director, NS Centre on Aging

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Our Mission

Through research, education and community engagement, the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging advances knowledge on aging to inform social policy and practice and enhance the quality of life of older people and their families.



What's Happening...

TEDxMSVU Aging Well a success!

TEDxMSVU

x = independently organized TED event



On October 4 the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging hosted the fourth annual TEDxMSVU event, focusing on the theme of "Aging Well". This event was in recognition of International Day of the Older Person (October 1). The event featured several dynamic speakers whose talks will be available on the TEDx site and through www.msvu.ca/tedxmsvu.

Thank you to our partner the NS Department of Seniors, emcee Norma Lee MacLeod and the many volunteers who made this event a success.

NSCA work gains insights about older workers

NSCA is working with the Department of Seniors and Department of Labour and Advanced Education to identify what best supports the continued attachment of older Nova Scotians to the workplace. Focus groups with older adults currently employed or looking for work, interviews with select focus group participants and interviews with employers have provided valuable insights. It is expected that results of this work will inform initiatives to enhance the participation of older Nova Scotians in the labour force.

The work underway in Nova Scotia was shared at the International Federation on Aging 14th Global Conference on Ageing in August which featured many other presentations on older workers.

Seniors-Adding Life to Years moving data into results



Pictured above: Dr. Janice Keefe (foreground) strategizing activities, timeline and deliverables with SALTY project leads and knowledge users, Calgary, April 2018.

This Pan-Canadian, four-year (2016–2020), CIHR funded project is wrapping up data collection. The SALTY Policy and Evaluation teams have completed data collection and are deep into their analyses. The Monitoring Care Practices team in Alberta will finish resident and family interviews this winter and SALTY ethnographic researchers plan to finish their fieldwork at facilities in the four project provinces (ON, NS, BC and AB) by Spring 2019.

Findings from SALTY teams will be presented at the Canadian Association on Gerontology conference (Vancouver, October 2018), Gerontological Society of America conference (Boston, November 2018), Trent Aging conference (Ontario, May 2019) and through a brainXchange webinar supported by the Alzheimer Society of Canada in April 2019. The project's Trainee Network meets regularly, connecting with and benefiting from the project's iKT approach. Follow the team at: www.SALTYItc.ca
f SALTYItc @SALTY_Itc

Home Care Pathways team meets in Halifax



Close to 20 researchers, students, decision makers and other sector representatives met in Halifax for their first in person meeting in late September. The meeting provided an opportunity for team members to dive deep into discussions about policy and practice differences between the two study sites – Winnipeg and Nova Scotia – important context as the work evolves. The project's three working groups – data, care constellations, policy – are now charged with work plans to implement over the coming months. Stay up to date on the team's progress at www.homecarepathways.ca MSVU.CA/NSCA

Out and About

Presentation about NSCA to Elder Learners group



Dr. Janice Keefe talking about NSCA's work in advancing policy and practice as part of the Elder Learners lecture series, Halifax.

Dr. Janice Keefe contributing to Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Expert Panel



From Left Dr Isabelle Vedel; Dr Howard Bergman, Dr. Keefe, Carrie McAiney, Debra Morgan - via Zoom, Sonya Kupta (consultant) and Dr. David Hogan.

Dr. Keefe is a member of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Panel who are mandated to provide an evidence-informed and authoritative assessment on the state of knowledge to help advance federal priorities under the National Strategy for Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Act. The Panel has been meeting since February and is expected to release its report later this fall.

Have you Heard...

Dr. Janice Keefe appointed to Expert Panel on Long Term Care

Dr. Keefe is one of three individuals appointed by Nova Scotia's Minister of Health and Wellness to an expert advisory panel to look at ways to improve the quality of long-term care in Nova Scotia.

The Panel's work is to include:

- identifying evidence-based solutions to improve quality of care in long-term care facilities
- recommending appropriate staffing levels, staff complement and skill mix for long-term care facilities
- advising on the recruitment and retention of long-term care staff

The panel has been asked to report back with recommendations by November 30.

NSCA welcomes Post Doctoral Fellow Mary Jean Hande



The NSCA is pleased to welcome Dr. Mary Jean Hande to the NSCA team. Mary Jean arrived in Halifax in July to work on the Seniors – Adding Life to Years project with Scientific Lead Dr. Keefe and the other lead investigators and members of the SALTY team. Dr. Hande earned her PhD in Adult Education and Community Development at the University of Toronto and just recently completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Community Health Services at University of Manitoba. Her research focuses on community based alternative care models and practices exploring the politics of care in social movements, community-based responses to austerity and financialized transnational economies. Welcome Mary Jean!

Presentations & Publications

Publications:

Guberman, N., Keefe, J., & Fancey, P. (published online 05 July 2018). The assessment experience of spousal dementia caregivers. "It's made me realize that I am a person also". *Ageing & Society*.

Presentations:

Keefe, J. (2018, July). *Caregivers and health inequalities in aging populations*. Oral presentation to joint session Health Inequalities in Aging Populations: Canadian Contributions, XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology, Toronto.

Keefe, J. (2018, September). *Current projects and key areas of interest of the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging*. Presentation to Elder Learners, Halifax.

Fancey, P. & Haggart, E. (2018, August). *Older worker employment: A look at why and how*. Presentation at the International Federation on Ageing, 14th Global Conference on Ageing, Toronto.

Carrière, Y., Moore, K., Décarie, Y., Hicks, C., Keefe, J. & Légaré, J. (2018, June). *Projection of Canadians workers into potential caregiving situation*. Oral presentation to 52nd Annual Conference of the Canadian Economics Association, Montreal.

Aubrecht, K., Keefe, J., & Stevens, S. (2018, May). *Leadership, collaboration & creativity: Critical to person- and family- centred continuing care service delivery for older adults with dementia and psychiatric comorbidities*. Oral presentation to the Canadian Association of Health Services and Policy Research, Montreal.

Keefe, J., Estabrooks, C., Bourgeault, I., Taylor, D., & Stajduhar, K. (2018, May). *Adding life to years for long term care residents*. Panel presentation to the Canadian Association of Health Services and Policy Research, Montreal.

News from the Global Aging and Community Initiative



The Global Aging and Community Initiative (GACI) is directed by Dr. Zachary Zimmer, Tier 1 Canada Research Chair. Activities at the GACI over the last several months included:

- Hosting a PhD student in demography from the Institute for Population and Social Research at Mahidol University in Thailand;
- Helping to organize the 2018 REVES Annual Meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan;
- Leading a workshop at Duke-NUS in Singapore on multi-level modeling, conducted at The Centre of Ageing Research and Education;
- Launching a Disability-Free Life Expectancy Calculator using data from research conducted as part of a grant awarded by the John Templeton Foundation. This calculator can be found at <https://wp.me/P7RcQB-Y>

For more info on the GACI visit their website: www.globalagingandcommunity.com

The GACI, which shares space with the NSCA in the Mount's Dr. Rosemarie Sampson Centre on Aging, helps to position the Mount as a centre of excellence on aging.

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Opportunities to Support NSCA

Dr. F.R. MacKinnon Endowment Fund

If you would like to support the efforts of the NSCA, contributions can be made to the Dr. F.R. MacKinnon Fund through the Mount's University Advancement Office at 902-457-6470.

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