

Mind Matters

Autumn 2023

Department of Psychiatry Newsletter

Calgary Zone

Volume XXVI Issue 3



Message from the Department Head

Dr. Valerie Taylor

This has been an interesting year for the Addictions and Mental Health portfolio. There have been many, many accomplishments. There has also been much uncertainty, but I have been inspired by the work of everyone's commitment to excellence. Our residency program is winning international awards, our researchers are having local, national and international impact and our care teams continue to provide exceptional care we can all be proud of. The volumes of patients presenting to our acute care clinics, discharged to our community care teams and co-managed by our partners in primary care continue to grow, and so does our portfolio. We have recruited over 100 psychiatrists in the past 5 year and this last year saw the most growth ever. We have added a huge cadre of new nurses to our team, especially to emergency services, and given the nursing shortages across the system, those new hires are with us because they enjoy this work and we are grateful for it, and to them. We have also added clinical assistants to our portfolio and, again, welcome the additional care providers whom are there to help us meet the health system's needs. As the

year came to a conclusion, we saw substantial change in the Addictions and Mental Health portfolio, and I hope this indicates a recognition of how important this area of medicine is understood to be. I am sure the new year will bring additional challenges, and additional opportunities and I look forward to your continued advocacy to ensure we do our best for Albertans.



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Kolabo-McMUST Partnership Uganda Trip 2023 Kolabo Kolabo — September 27, 2023 Dr. Muwanguzi Moses, Dr. Matiko Mwita, Dr. Mukiibi Nicholas, Dr. Kugonza Tonny, Julian Kembabazi, Dr. Elisabeth Merner, Dr



Kolabo-McMUST Partnership Uganda Trip
2023

Kolabo Kolabo — September 27, 2023



**MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

COLLABORATION
FOR

**MENTAL
HEALTH
EDUCATION**



IN SEPTEMBER 2023, PSYCHIATRISTS AND TRAINEES FROM MCMASTER UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY IN CANADA WILL MEET WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS AT MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (MUST) IN UGANDA ALONGSIDE COLLEAGUES FROM THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES (CUHAS) IN TANZANIA TO DISCUSS PSYCHIATRIC TRAINING PROGRAMS. THESE TEAMS HAVE A SHARED GOAL OF TRAINING MORE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN EAST AFRICA AND PROVIDING ADEQUATE MENTAL HEALTH CARE TO ALL.



**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF
HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES**



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Dr. Muwanguzi Moses, Dr. Matiko Mwita, Dr. Mukiibi Nicholas, Dr. Kugonza Tonny, Julian Kembabazi, Dr. Elisabeth Merner, Dr. Gemma Simbae, Dr. Shabani Moshi, Dr. Namwase Joyce, Dr. Deborah Adesegun, Dr. Megan Howlett, Dr. Angela Li, and Dr. Angella Nanziri (left to right, back then front)

Purpose Of Partnership

For over 10 years, McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada has been partnering with the Mbarara University of Sciences and Technology (MUST) in Mbarara, Uganda to provide resources and psychiatric residency training under the leadership of Dr. Godfrey Rukundo and Dr. Sheila Harms. As a result, McMaster University psychiatrists and residents have travelled to Uganda on many occasions to assist with consultation and learning opportunities alongside their local counterparts. In the fall of 2022, members of the Kolabo team met with Dr. Harms to discuss the possibility of a joint partnership. As many reading this are aware, Kolabo is the partnership between the University of Calgary and the Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS) in Mwanza, Tanzania. Kolabo has been transitioning from a focus on undergraduate medical education to starting a psychiatric residency program at CUHAS in the near future. As a result, the Kolabo teams felt there was a lot to be learned from the successes of McMUST over the past decade.

Trip planning began in June 2023 and over several months a team and joint mission were planned with individuals from four universities coming together to learn as one and work towards the common goal of building capacity for psychiatry and mental health care in East Africa. McMaster University members Dr. Sheila Harms and Dr. Angela Li (PGY3) met with University of Calgary members Dr.

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Megan Howlett, Dr. Elisabeth Merner (PGY5), and Dr. Deborah Adesegun (PGY3) to travel to Uganda this September. The Kolabo team was also able to sponsor the arrival of Dr. Matiko Mwita and Dr. Gemma Simbae from CUHAS. The Calgary and CUHAS teams hope to build a similar collaboration and psychiatry residency program in Mwanza, hopefully to begin in October 2024.

Day 1

The first day at Mbarara University of Sciences and Technology (MUST) brought all of the teams from four universities together to meet one another. The morning began strong with Monday morning inpatient major ward rounds. These rounds cover the presentation and management of patients living with major mental illnesses, including Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, HIV induced psychotic illnesses, and other neurological conditions, such as Epilepsy. Consultation occurred between residents and staff psychiatrists with perspectives from the various cultural and scientific knowledge bases. After these rounds, members of each of our four teams were able to get to know one another better and discuss their common reasons for wanting to pursue a career in psychiatry, which often included caring for those impacted by stigma.



Discussion around alcohol use and its relevance to psychiatry.



Dr. Kugonza Tonny and Dr. Namwase Joyce—third year residents of the MUST psychiatry program.

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Day 2

In the morning, residents from Canada and the psychiatrists from Tanzania were able to form groups with the Ugandan resident physicians and see patients from either the inpatient unit who required further assessment or in the outpatient clinic setting. Team members collaborated on history taking, diagnostic formulations, and management plans. In the afternoon, Dr. Kugonza Tonny and Dr. Namwase Joyce gave a presentation discussing Alcohol Use Disorders which was followed by an explorative group discussion around alcohol use in both the East African and Canadian cultural contexts, its medical and psychiatric sequelae and how to help those suffering from addiction to alcohol.



Dr. Deborah Adesegun and Dr. Elisabeth Merner lead a lecture on Cannabis Use Disorders.

Day 3

The morning began with a teaching session by Dr. Sheila Harms for the residents about Speech & Language Disorders. Uganda has 30-40 speech and language pathologists reportedly to serve an approximate 1.5 million children with speech and language disorders which have a functional impact on both the individual and their family. The team members were able to discuss this resource shortage in all of our clinical settings, as well as how to recognize such disorders, and what the general psychiatrist can try to do to help. The team then worked together until the afternoon in a child and adolescent mental health outpatient clinic. Following this, there was an afternoon teaching session which was led by Drs. Elisabeth Merner and Deborah Adesegun on Marijuana Use Disorders.



Dr. Harms leading a discussion on speech and language disorders.

Post Graduate Medical Education (PGME) Program

Dr. Rory Sellmer, Pauline Burgess

If you are affiliated with our department, or with any department in medicine, one of the vital roles that we play is that of educators at the medical school. This affects some of us more and some of us less, but we are all impacted by how well we are represented in undergraduate medical education. And, whether you are aware of it or not, we have been witness to a tremendous achievement at the medical school.

The impact of our success at the medical school has been felt in many ways. For over a decade, we have been the most highly rated and most successful course at the medical school. We have routinely outperformed internists, surgeons, pediatricians and every other specialty in this regard. This accomplishment leads to a number of positive side effects. We routinely recruit more psychiatry-interested medical students at the University of Calgary per capita than any other university. We reduce students' stigma of mental health for themselves and for our patients and have a publication to prove it (Papish et. al., BMC Medical Education, 2013). And, maybe most importantly, we help future physicians understand patients as complete people, considering their bodies and their minds in their overall health and quality of life.

The success has been a collaborative effort from people who work at teaching as a labour of love, and over the years there have been

countless individuals and thousands of hours spent helping to achieve these goals. Chief among these enthusiasts has been the Chair of Course 7, Phil Stokes. If you are aware of it or not, Dr. Stokes has had the longest tenure of any specialist over the most successful course at the medical school.

The experience of being a chair of a course and interfacing with the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education has been a challenge during his reign. He has faced constant requests to restructure our course, to surrender time to other courses, and to limit our efforts of recruitment in order to satisfy the needs of the medical school. In each case Dr. Stokes has represented our interests with resolve, integrity and class. At the same time, he has been the warm, approachable face of our course for all of the students who need his support.

As many of you know, the medical school has transitioned to a new curriculum, and at the end of September, Dr. Stokes will have presided over the last Course 7 to be delivered ever, and in doing so, will hand the reins over to a new generation of educators. I will be forever grateful for his leadership and wisdom and thank him for his influence over an entire generation of physicians who loved psychiatry a little more because of him.

Lauren Zanussi



The Summit : Marian & Jim Sinneave Centre For Youth Resilience

On March 13, 2023, Calgary opened its doors to the first community health centre designed exclusively for child and youth mental health. Since that time, hundreds of youth and families have benefited from the services provided. Funding for this centre was provided by the generosity of community donors via the Build Them Up campaign through the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation. The goal of the centre was to help mitigate gaps in mental health care for youth and reduce burden on emergency services.

The following services are provided at The Summit:

Owerko Family Walk-In Services

Youth are seen on a first come, first served basis - requiring no community referral. The walk-in therapy session may include just the child or adolescent, but in most cases the preferred option will be to have the whole family be a part of the session. Patients and their families receive: one hour counselling session, access to a one time psychiatric consultation as needed and based on availability, discharge recommendations and additional referrals

where necessary.



Tallman Family Services - Intensive Community Treatment

This program is designed as a "step up" from current community care. Youth referred to this program receive scheduled intensive individual, family, and group therapy provided for 1-4 hours daily for a period of approximately 4 weeks. Services include: Psychological, Ed-psych, and Occupational Therapy (OT) testing, individual and family therapy, occupational therapy, psychiatric consultation as needed and patient, parent and multi-family clinical groups.

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had been in hospital within the last month, the team has been recommending a direct referral to Ptarmigan Day Hospital to divert them from a readmittance to the hospital and this has proven to be extremely effective.

Ptarmigan Day Hospital

This is a “step down” program for children and teens who are within AHS mental health inpatient services. On average, young people are engaged with the program for two weeks as they make the transition from hospital back to home, school, and community life. This is often a tenuous time and many patients end up returning to Emergency and readmitted to hospital. This program is effectively interrupting that cycle and helping kids stay out of hospital wherever possible. When appropriate, if a child



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CAP Subspecialty Program

Dr. Nneka Orakwue-Ononye

It's incredible how fast the year is rolling by! The CAP program keeps striving to keep pace as our new trainees have all settled in and are working through their rotations. The RPC is back following the summer break and all geared up to embrace the new year. We have also had the pleasure of having Dr. Emily Fraser, PGY6, from Dalhousie University, on an elective rotation here in Calgary.

The trainees had a fantastic time hiking in the mountains for their retreat on 5 September 2023, kindly supported by Dr. Iliana Ortega! Thank you, Dr. Ortega.

The program is equally excited to announce the recent approval of two extra funded positions, bringing us up to 5 funded training positions for PGY5 in 2024. The recruitment interviews were held on 12 October 2023, and the offer letters will go out on 26 October 2023. We are hopeful that these five positions will be filled. Many thanks to Dr Melinda Davis and Dr Valerie Taylor for making this possible, and our appreciation goes to the recruitment panel for supporting a successful recruitment process.

Thanks again to all our faculty for supporting our trainees and wishing you all the best of the fall season!



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Mathison Centre

Mathison members receive Royal Society of Canada and College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists recognition.



Kirsten Fiest

*College of New Scholars,
Artists and Scientists*



Gina Dimitroupoulos

*College of New Scholars,
Artists and Scientists*



David Hodgins

*Royal Society of Canada
Fellow*



Nicole Letourneau

*Royal Society of Canada
Fellow*

Monitoring wastewater for traces of opioids and other lethal drugs

Thanks to funding from the Calgary Health Foundation, a team of researchers led by Dr. Monty Ghosh have been monitoring wastewater for traces of opioids and other illicit drugs. The team hopes that findings can help decision makers to develop proactive response plans to address drug related crisis in communities. The study was also supported by pilot funding from The Mathison Centre.



Recent findings by the research team indicate that elevated amounts of carfentanyl, a synthetic opioid used in veterinary medicine to tranquilize large animals was found in wastewater during the same period when increase in the number of deaths were recorded. The next phase of the study is to determine the best way to share

information with relevant stakeholders to inform decision making. Read more [here](#)

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Bullying, Suicidal Thoughts Linked to More Frequent Headaches in Teens

A Canadian population-based study involving Mathison Centre clinical research fellow Christelle Nilles, and researchers Serena Orr, Scott Patten and Tamara Pringsheim, found that teens who have been bullied by their peers, or who have considered or attempted suicide were more likely to have frequent headaches than teens who have not experienced these problems. The study was published in the August 2, 2023 online issue of Neurology. Read more [here](#)



Designer \$hit: A documentary on fecal transplants and mental health



Microbiome and mental health expert Dr. Val Taylor is featured in a new documentary on fecal transplants and mental health to be released on November 14th, 2023.

After suffering from Ulcerative Colitis for nearly a decade, filmmaker Saffron Cassaday tries a new treatment known as Fecal Microbiota Transplant: taking stool from a healthy donor and implanting it into the gut of a sick patient. Using her partner as a stool donor, Saffron spares no details in exploring what some experts believe could be the

biggest medical breakthrough of the 21st century.

SAVE THE DATE: Mathison-Littmann Research Day 2024

The Mathison Centre and the Department of Psychiatry are pleased to announce March 15, 2024 for the next Mathison-Littmann research day. Save the date and look out for additional details coming soon.



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Awards and Achievements

- Dr. Liya Xie attended the 23rd WPA World Congress of Psychiatry which was held September 28-October 1, 2023 in Vienna Austria. While there she received 2 Certificates.

https://web.kenes.com/klead/WCP23/WCP2023ShortOralCertificate_1265.pdf

https://web.kenes.com/klead/WCP23/WCP2023ShortOralCertificate_2493.pdf

- The following psychiatrists were recognized with the Outstanding Resident Teaching Award: Patricia Maron; Rosalyn McAuley; Zahra Mohamed; Iliana Ortega and Daniel Sontag.
- Congratulations to Dr Daniel Chinedu Okoro, who was elected the President-Elect and Ethics representative of the Western Canada District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association on 24 September 2023.

Announcements

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Rohit Ghatge to the Unit 22 team at the Foothills Medical Centre. Most of you will recognize Rohit as a valued psychiatry resident, with a strong interest in medical education. We are excited for him to start on Unit 22 in July of 2024.

Please join me in welcoming Tyler Faulds to our group. Tyler is primarily based out of RGH. He will be providing casual coverage in C/L and PES (and perhaps more...).

We are delighted to announce that Dr. Christine Desjardins has accepted a locum position on Unit 22 at the Foothills Medical Centre, starting immediately.

You may recognize Christine as one of our own psychiatry graduates, and she brings a keen interest in treatment of patients with trauma, as well as in general psychiatry.

I would like to congratulate Dr. Dallas Seitz, a geriatric psychiatrist in our Department and active member of the Mathison/HBI on being appointed as the Scientific Director for provincial mental health and addiction.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) Calgary Zone and the Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) are

pleased to announce the reappointment of Dr. Valerie Taylor, MD, PhD, as the head of the Department of Psychiatry.

The reappointment is for the period September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2028.

On behalf of the Department, I am excited to announce that Dr. Bemen Yassa has been hired as the new Clinical Assistant effective September 25, 2023. Dr. Yassa will be working at Foothills Medical Center and South Health Campus.

Bemen Yassa, an international medical graduate, was born in Egypt and received his M.B.B.Ch. Bachelor's Degree from Assiut University Faculty



of Medicine. He also holds a diploma in Police Sciences from the Police Academy in Egypt, allowing him to practice medicine in the Egyptian police Hospitals.



Bon Voyage Pauline!

On Friday the 13th of October, the department came together to celebrate the retirement of Pauline Burgess in high style. Pauline's long career at AHS has spanned over 25 years, most of which was spent in her role as the postgraduate training coordinator for the Department of Psychiatry. There were a few tears and plenty of laughter, as residents and staff shared tributes and stories. Finally, Pauline took the mic and reminisced about the amazing journey that our residency program has made over the past decades. With the help of Pauline's steadfast care, attention, and expertise, the CSM Department of Psychiatry residency training program has evolved to become one of the most competitive and innovative in the country. As the evening wrapped up, Pauline announced her legacy award; 'The Pauline Burgess Fairy-Godmother Award'. The inaugural winner, chosen by Pauline, was Dr Amy Fowler, PGY-4.

We have been so fortunate to work with you Pauline. You will be missed, and not forgotten.





Farewell to Course 7

The lights are off in Theatre 4, and Lauren Zanussi has deliberately misspelled his name for the final time; Zambezi, Zamboni, Zucchini. Cindy Baxter will no longer litter the front desks with sex toys and blow-up dolls as she pushes the limits on what may be said to undergraduates in the interests of making them comfortable talking about sexual disorders. And Aaron Mackie has for the last time prefaced his series of pharmacology lectures by satirising the industry with a description of 'Despondex', a medication to treat the disorder of unnatural cheerfulness. The medical school is reorganizing its preclerkship curriculum and so Course 7, previously known as the Mind Course, came to its final conclusion at the end of September. From now on psychiatry will be taught in a spiral fashion, integrated into a new curriculum which teaches all subject areas throughout the year, rather than in the time-constrained silos that we know so well.

Credit is due to everyone who has worked so hard over the years to make this one of Calgary's most popular and effective medical school courses. Popular because the students' numerical grading of their teaching has made it repeatedly the best ranked course in their undergraduate curriculum. And effective because it has always helped Calgary draw more students into a career in psychiatry than the Canadian average. The usual suspects mentioned in the first paragraph deserve their

accolades, but it is our depth of teaching commitment that really underlies the success of the course. That means that every one of you who has ever led a small group, or taken students on to the wards for a clinical correlation session, or given a lecture, or helped with the smooth administration of a hundred and seventy trainees every year, deserves a huge thank-you for your work over so many years.

Course 7 may be over, but the work of teaching psychiatry goes on, and in the new curriculum – called RIME for Re-Imagining Medical Education – we are fortunate to have a new generation of psychiatrists representing our interests in the medical school. Huntae Kim, and Sterling Sparshu, and Manrit Takhar will be our leaders going forward, and I hope you will all give them your support, just as you have helped me so much over the last dozen years.

I may be stepping down from course leadership, but I still plan to be teaching into the future as a small group facilitator. I will certainly miss some aspects of the course but, as the lights dimmed for the last time, I did appreciate the thought that I would no longer have to suffer the annual embarrassment of standing on a desk by the lecture podium, in front of a hundred or so students, acting out the manic symptom of sexual disinhibition. There are some things that I am just getting too old for.

Phil Stokes



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
CUMMING SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Psychiatry



THE MATHISON CENTRE
for MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Mind Matters is distributed to psychiatry medical staff and faculty, psychiatry residents, program directors and section chiefs, Alberta Health Services executives, and psychiatry support staff.

Submissions & Inquiries: Marissa Mackenzie Marissa.mackenzie@ahs.ca

Phone (403) 944-1298