

# Mind Matters

Spring 2022

Department of Psychiatry Newsletter

Calgary Zone

Volume XXII/Issue 1



## Message from the Department Head

*Dr. Valerie Taylor*

Welcome to our Spring issue of Mind Matters. There are a number of things at play across the health system and I know it is a busy time for all of us. Our most recent positive news is the successful completion of our 2021 Carms process and we are excited to again have a full match of excellent applicants. A huge part of this is due to the amazing faculty we have involved in the training program. The department also continues to expand in other ways as well, with the SHC and PLC PICU units coming online and the race to the finish line regarding the Community child center. We also have green lit a number of additional CMD roles and I hope these pieces improve both capacity and patient flow but help boost morale. Please know your voices are heard and your advocacy helps propel us forward. Continue to ensure the system works for you and your patients. I encourage you to continue to use your voice and I do feel hopeful the

positive changes we make will continue. As always, continue to reach out to me as well with issues you feel are important.

Best, Val



## Department of Psychiatry



### Kolabo 2022 Update:

Throughout the COVID19 pandemic, the University of Calgary and the Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS) have worked together to continue providing necessary psychiatry training to medical students in Mwanza, Tanzania. Prior to the pandemic, the University of Calgary would send a ground team of psychiatrists and psychiatry resident doctors to help provide didactic lectures and small group learning related to mental health topics such as Depression, Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, suicide, and addictions. However, due to travel restrictions, strategic collaboration was required to continue the Kolabo project. CUHAS educators, including Dr. Mwita, rose to the challenge of providing this vital training to their medical students, with virtual support from afar. The psychiatry curriculum was effectively delivered in 2021 via pre-recorded vodcasts by the University of Calgary psychiatry residents and in-

person lectures by Dr. Mwita, Dr. Hauli, and Dr. Simbee in 2021.

This year, the teams once again effectively worked together to continue using the vodcasts created in 2021 and simultaneously the capacity at CUHAS has continued to expand. We were able to create additional small group learning modules related to Somatic Disorders, Trauma-Related Disorders and treatments related to psychotherapy and psychiatric medications! The photos included in this article, are of MD5, or fifth year medical students, assisting in teaching their junior counterparts, MD3 or third year medical students, at CUHAS about various mental health topics this semester. Due to the growing but still small number of trained psychiatrists in Mwanza, this model was developed to assist with providing a fulsome and sustainable education for medical

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students. This methodology is novel in medical training within Tanzania but has been highly effective and as a result is being explored by other departments.

Small group learning in Mwanza can occur inside the classroom or in outdoor venues as pictured. As mentioned, the topics discussed in small group learning typically focus on various major mental illnesses, and the associated epidemiology, diagnosis, course of illness, and most importantly evidence based means of treatment.



[Left to right clockwise] Dr. Rita Watterson, Dr. Paige Durling, Dr. Hilary Aadland, Dr. Alynna Lirette, Dr. Matiko Mwita, & Dr. Elisabeth Merner having dinner together in Calgary.

Currently, Dr. Mwita is in Calgary for work related to his PhD in maternal mental health and non-pharmacological treatment options for anxiety and depression. While in Calgary, he has had an opportunity to spend time with the local Kolabo team members and will have several meetings with the University and our team to discuss future directions for Kolabo in Mwanza, including potential opportunities with developing a psychiatry residency training program at CUHAS.

Special thank you to all of the University of Calgary Kolabo 2022 Team: Dr. Rita Watterson, Dr. Kimberly Williams, Dr. Phil Stokes, Dr. Margie Oakander, Dr. Paige Durling, Dr. Megan Howlett, Dr. Hilary Aadland, Dr. Elisabeth Merner, Dr. Jaylynn Arcand, Dr. Amy Fowler, Dr. Alynna Lirette, Dr. Deborah Adesugen, and Dr. Raveen Virk. Special thank you to all of the CUHAS Kolabo Team: Dr. Matiko Mwita, Dr. Catherine Magwiza, Dr. Kiyeti Agnes Hauli, and Dr. Gemma Simbee.

If you are interested in learning more or donating, please check out our social media or [kolabo.org](http://kolabo.org)!



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## Sebastian K Littmann Day

The 35th Annual Sebastian K. Littmann Research Day was held on March 4th, 2022. The event was Zoom-based, hopefully for the last time. The event had > 120 registrants and featured a keynote presentations by Dr. Simone Vigod (Women's College Research Institute/University of Toronto) on maternal/perinatal mental health. There was also a symposium on post-graduate student mental health featuring Dr. Andrew Szeto (Director of the Campus Mental Health Strategy), Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos (Associate Professor, University of Calgary) and Dr. Jennifer Thannhouser (Associate Director, Counselling, at the Student Centre).

Congratulations and thank you to all of the presenters and attendees, and to the award winners:

- ❖ Best Presentation by a Graduate Student: Daniella Vellone. "MBI-

apathy, ApoEε2 and risk for Alzheimer disease dementia." Her supervisor is Dr. Zahinoor Ismail.

- ❖ Best Presentation by a Resident: Dr. Howie Wu. "Serotonin syndrome and catatonia in the absence of a serotonergic agent following withdrawal of clozapine"
- ❖ Best presentation by an undergraduate student: Dr. Ana Ramirez "The prevalence of excessive exercise in individuals with eating disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis."

The abstract have been archived to the University of Calgary's PRISM archive. They will be indexed in Google Scholar so that they can be cited in future research work. This will also support confirmation of the presentations on the participants' CVs. See <https://prism.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/114447>

## Post Graduate Medical Education (PGME) Program

Dr. Rory Sellmer, Pauline Burgess



## Upcoming Events

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**EMBER**

Exploring Mental  
health Barriers in  
Emergency Rooms

The EMBER Study presents:

***Understanding & Addressing  
Mental Illness Stigma Holistically***

Join us for a presentation & panel  
discussion exploring mental health  
barriers and mental illness stigma in  
emergency rooms

Save the Date!  
Friday, May 6  
12-1:30 pm

In partnership with:



- **Dr Izu Nwachukwu** is leading a research study as *Principal Investigator* on "*Covid-19 Vaccine Intentions Amongst Black Communities in Alberta*". The Research team is kindly requesting that the attached flyer is shared widely with all contacts within the black community as they seek to optimize the survey uptake and participation.  
[..\Submissions\Survey -final.pdf](#)

**Mathison Centre**

*Dr. Paul Arnold, Josephine Adda*

**Eating disorders rose  
dramatically among young  
Canadians during the first  
wave of COVID**

According to Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos, research has revealed that the first wave of the pandemic saw a veritable explosion of paediatric hospitalizations across Canada. Interestingly, these hospitalizations were not for COVID-19 but instead eating disorders. The spike in eating disorder admissions to emergency departments and the long waitlists across eating disorder programs occurred not just in Canada, but internationally. Full story found [here](#).

A related research; first-of-its-kind study by Dr. Pardis Pedram, MD, PhD. revealed that

a lifetime history of an eating disorder increases risk of premature mortality nearly five times in the general Canadian population. The study followed participants for 15 years to understand the impact of eating



disorders. Read the [full story here](#).

## Mental illness stigma among health-care workers.



Working in conjunction with Foothills Hospital Emergency Services, Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Calgary Health

Foundation, Dr. Jacqueline Smith is leading the Exploring Mental health Barriers in Emergency Rooms (EMBER) study to address the multiple levels (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional) of mental illness stigma existing within the health-care system, specifically within emergency room settings. **Read the full story [here](#).**

The EMBER team in collaboration with the Mathison Centre is organising a symposium during mental health week to bring together sector stakeholders to share some findings of the study and support collective rather than siloed work. The symposium will focus on “Understanding & Addressing Mental

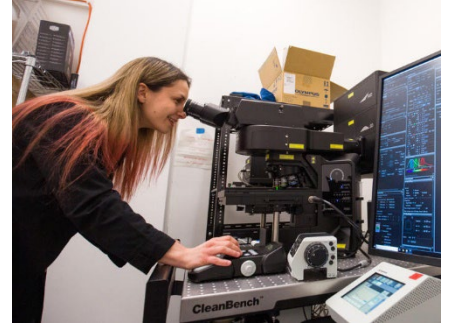


*Illness Stigma*

*Holistically*”. Speakers and panelists include researchers, health care providers, AHS leaders and change agents, mental health funders, and patient research partners. Date: May 6, 2022 from 12pm - 1:30pm. **[Register](#).**

## Neurological impact of chronic stress in youth and adolescents

According to Dr. Derya Sargin, PhD, “The types of stress that can result in long-term health concerns would be those that expose kids to physical, sexual, emotional abuse, violence, or neglect.” Sargin, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology and a member of the Mathison Centre, has been awarded a Canadian Foundation for Innovation John R. Evans Leaders Fund (CFI JELF) grant to fund her research team’s study of the neurological effects of chronic stress on young brains. There is ample evidence that chronic stress during early life can change the architecture of the brain resulting in disruptions in brain connectivity; changes that are risk factors for the outcome of long-term emotional and social difficulties, and for neuropsychiatric diseases such as mood disorders. **[Read more here](#).**



## Digital mental health resources for women

In Canada, only about eight per cent of health research funding goes to women’s health. Dr. Dawn Kingston, Lois Hole Hospital for Women Cross-Provincial Chair in Women’s Mental Health Research is working hard to address the inequality with her HOPE digital mental health platform, providing personalized risk and symptom mental health screening digitally for women as well as offering education, therapy and ‘next step’ recommendations. **[Read the full story here](#).**

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## The Mathison Centre for Mental Health Research & Education marks 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

The Mathison Centre for Mental Health Research & Education is marking 10 years of elevating research in mental health with a number of research and community outreach activities.

Under a partnership with Telus Spark, researchers are presenting in a 4 series Science Café from March to June 2022 on various mental health topics. Upcoming cafés in May and June are “[Spit for Science](#)” by Dr. Paul Arnold and “[Gut Feelings](#)” by Dr. Valerie Taylor.

**REVISED:** Save the date for two days of seminars on October 14 & 28, 2022, featuring a great line up of speakers including Michael D. Fox (Harvard), Srividya Iyer (McGill University), Dylan Gee



(Yale), Christopher Mushquash (Lakehead University), Michelle Munson (New York University), and Ziva Cooper (UCLA).

### Mental Health Week events

Think Big – May 5 – Register [here](#)

EMBER – May 6 – Register [here](#)

## Awards and Achievements

- Carly Sears was accepted as a Masters Graduate student to Community Health Sciences with Dr. Janet de Groot as her primary supervisor and Dr. Jess Simon as co-supervisor. Carly was also a CIHR graduate student scholarship for September 2022 – September 2023
- February 24, 2022 CMA. Working mothers have suffered tremendous levels of stress throughout the pandemic – and doctors are no exception. A recent study found that physician mothers scored substantially higher on measures of anxiety and depression than physician fathers, in part because they’ve had to take on a disproportionate share of the increased childcare and online schooling needs.

[www.cma.ca](http://www.cma.ca)

[Sound Mind podcast – Dr. Mom and COVID-19: The stress of being in constant demand | CMA](#)

- Robert L. Tanguay Royal College Award for Early Career Leadership  
<https://newsroom.royalcollege.ca/innovating-for-enhanced-patient-care-early-career-leadership-honorees-make-their-mark/>

- On December 1, 2021, **Dr Izu Nwachukwu** accepted an appointment as an **Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria**. This position is **non-stipendiary**. In this role, Dr Nwachukwu will be advising the University Vice Chancellor and Provost of the Medical School on matters relating to Education Policy, Curriculum Development, Clinical Governance, and International Liaison.



## Publications

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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.*

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## COVID-19 VACCINE INTENTIONS AMONG BLACK COMMUNITIES IN ALBERTA

*Have your say! Share your thoughts and  
opinions on the COVID-19 Vaccine*  
Use this link:  
[https://redcap.ucalgary.ca/surveys/?  
s=YX99FR4YKT](https://redcap.ucalgary.ca/surveys/?s=YX99FR4YKT)

Access code: **NCWN8WJY3**

**SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE**



*For more information, kindly call/email:  
+1 (587) 938-5596/+1 (403) 397-3974  
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### Research goals

- 1  
Generate data on COVID-19 vaccine experiences and intentions among black communities in Alberta.
- 2  
Inform and direct policy and actions that will better serve and support black communities.
- 3  
Inform planning and ensure equitable prioritization of health system resources and interventions.

