



# THE SYNAPSE

The CCNA Training and Capacity Building Program Newsletter  
Connecting CCNA Trainees Across Canada

As we come to the end of CCNA Phase I, the Training and Capacity Building (T&CB) Program is looking back over program highlights and trainee accomplishments in 2018. We are also looking ahead to CCNA Phase II by welcoming our new Program Lead Dr. Colleen Maxwell and the new T&CB Program Co-Lead Dr. Manuel Montero-Odasso.

## Departure

### CCNA Phase I Lead – Dr. David Hogan

The T&CB Program would like to thank Dr. David Hogan for his tremendous dedication to and leadership of the T&CB Program over the last four years. David oversaw the development of educational resources for trainees including a social media guide and a series of five training videos on how to conduct interviews with print and television journalists. He was invaluable to the planning process for the CCNA Science Day and Partners Forum and sought to empower trainees within the CCNA by having them participate in the Conference Program Planning Committee. Highlights of David's tenure include a Trainee



Preconference in 2017 - "Effective Communication in a Digital World" - and a Trainee Symposium on interdisciplinary research at the 2018 CCNA Annual Meeting. We are fortunate that David will continue to be involved in several planned T&CB Program activities during Phase II.

## New T&CB Program Lead

### Dr. Colleen Maxwell

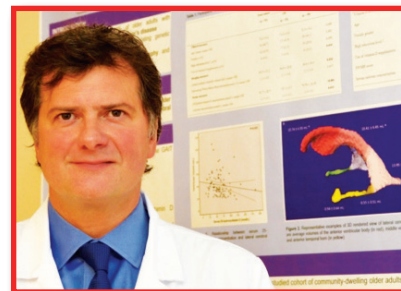


The T&CB Program is pleased to announce that Dr. Colleen Maxwell has been selected as the new program Lead. Dr. Colleen Maxwell is a Professor and University Research Chair with the

Schools of Pharmacy and Public Health & Health Systems, University of Waterloo, an Adjunct Scientist with ICES, and an Adjunct Professor with Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary. She is a senior health services researcher with expertise in aging, frailty, continuing care and pharmacoepidemiology. Her research interests include the quality of care and pharmacotherapy of older vulnerable populations – including those with dementia, depression and related disorders. She has contributed to training and mentorship activities with CIHR and other national and international scientific organizations. For the past 20 years, Colleen has worked closely with Dr. David Hogan, which will also allow for continuity in the T&CB vision going into Phase II.

## New T&CB Co-Lead

### Dr. Manuel Montero-Odasso



Please join us in welcoming Dr. Manuel Montero-Odasso to the role of T&CB Program Co-Lead.

Dr. Manuel Montero-Odasso (MD, PhD, FRCPC, AGSF, FGSA) is a Professor of Medicine,

Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Western Ontario and Director of the "Gait & Brain Lab" at Parkwood Institute, London, Ontario. He is a geriatrician and clinician-scientist at the Lawson Health Research Institute and serves as leader of the Mobility, Exercise and Cognition Team at the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA), co-leader of the CCNA Training and Capacity Building Program, and team co-leader at the Ontario Neurodegenerative Research Initiative (ONDRI).

He leads the Gait and Brain Health Program with the goal of understanding mechanisms and potential treatments of mobility and cognitive decline in older individuals. He focuses on gait performance and has established the use of "motor biomarkers" like slowing gait and dual-task gait to predict frailty, falls, and dementia in older people. He has pioneered clinical trials applying the novel approach of "improving cognition to improve mobility" using pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches such as physical exercise, cognitive training and non-invasive brain stimulation. As team leader in CCNA (Canada Research Dementia Strategy) he is leading multi-

domain clinical trials, including the SYNERGIC Trial, to delay dementia in older adults at risk (MCI spectrum) using physical exercises combined with cognitive training and nutritional interventions (Vitamin D).

## AAIC 2018 Travel Award Recipients

The Training and Capacity Building Program would like to congratulate the following trainees who were awarded CCNA travel awards to attend the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) 2018 in Chicago

### Nicolas Nunez, McGill University, Team 13

Abstract Title: A comparative study examining prevalence of lifetime psychiatric disorders as a risk factor for Behavioral Variant Frontotemporal Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease (Oral and poster presentation).

### Amy Nguyen, University of British Columbia, Team 9

Abstract Title: Routine Clinical Use of Mass Spectrometry for Quantification of Amyloid- $\beta$  1-40 and 1-42: Pre-Analytical and Analytical Considerations (Oral and poster presentation).

### Myuri Ruthirakuhan, Sunnybrook Research Institute, Team 11

Abstract Title: Investigating biomarkers of agitation in moderate-to-severe Alzheimer's disease patients enrolled in a randomized controlled trial with nabilone (Poster presentation).

### Tharick Ali Pascoal, McGill University, Team 2

Abstract Title: Brain epigenetic changes measured with the novel [ $^{11}\text{C}$ ]Martinostat PET mediate the effects of amyloid and tau PET deposition in cognition (Oral and poster presentation).

Nicolas Nunez and Amy Nguyen share a few words about themselves and on attending the conference.

### Nicolas Nunez –

"It is an honor to be the recipient of a CCNA Travel Award for the AAIC 2018 conference, which is one of the most influential dementia conferences worldwide. This experience has enlightened me and further stimulated my interest in neuropsychiatry specifically focusing on neuroimaging and clinical aspects of behavioral variant Frontal Temporal Dementia (bvFTD). Your award has allowed me to attend and develop skills through the educational workshops that included development of clinical trials and a focus on neuroimaging in dementia types. Attending this world-class event has also provided me with the possibility to foster networking opportunities, build new collaborations and learn about the latest updates from the most influential leaders in this field. Furthermore, it enabled me to present results from our work concerning the prevalence of psychiatric disorders as risk factors for bvFTD compared to Alzheimer's disease (AD) and the general population with incredible feedback from the audience."

### Amy Nguyen –

"I am a first year Master's student in the laboratory of Dr. Mari DeMarco in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of British Columbia. I was able to attend the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (for the first time) with support from the CCNA Travel Award. My poster abstract "Routine Clinical Use of Mass Spectrometry for Quantification of Amyloid- $\beta$  1-40 and 1-42: Pre-Analytical and Analytical Considerations" was selected for an oral presentation, which also provided the opportunity to share my research at Professional Interest Areas Day. This work focused on our lab's clinical test for Alzheimer's disease. The conference offered very educational lectures and workshops, and provided several networking opportunities for early career scientists. From this experience I was able to learn from and connect with mentors and colleagues from all over the world!"

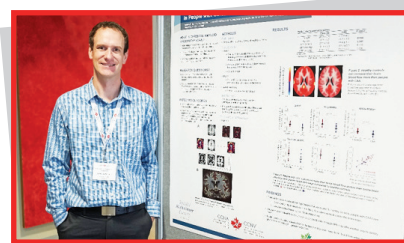
## 2018 CCNA Public Event Highlights



On September 30th, 2018 the CCNA, in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Canada and CIHR, hosted a day-long public event called "Dementia Risk Reduction: What the Research Tells Us." In this first-ever

event for the CCNA, members of the public had the opportunity to hear evidence-based advice from CCNA investigators on protective factors for dementia such as diet, exercise and building cognitive resilience. Six trainees participated in the event by presenting posters they developed for a public audience. We would like to thank the following trainees for participating in this very successful event:

### Andrew E. Beaudin, University of Calgary, Team 7



Poster title: The Ability to Increase Blood Flow and Brain Health in People with Cerebral Amyloid Angiopathy

### Arnaud Boujut, Université de Montréal, Team 10

Poster title: Où en est-on avec les programmes pour améliorer la cognition des personnes âgées ?



## Danielle D'Amico, Ryerson University, Team 6



Poster title: The Relationship Between Consuming a Western Diet and Cognitive Health in Late Life: Is It In Our Blood?

Emilie Ouellet, Université de Montréal, Team 10

Poster title : Entraînement cognitif chez les personnes âgées : une approche pour aider à mémoriser dans le bruit



Josh Titus, St. Joseph's Health Care London, Team 12



Poster title: What is the SYNERGIC Trial?

Stephanie Cullen, St. Joseph's Health Care London, Team 12

Poster title: Is There Something in the Way You Walk? Walking Assessments in the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA)



## 2018 CCNA Science Day and Partners Forum, Montreal, QC



CCNA members met in Montreal for the final Science Day and Partners Forum of CCNA Phase I. We were pleased to see so many trainees at the meeting, both new and familiar faces. Highlights

of the meeting included the Trainee Society Breakfast, hosted by members of the CCNA Trainee Society Executive Committee, the Science Day trainee poster session, The Trainee Data Blitz oral presentation session, and the Trainee Symposium - "Interdisciplinary Research: Challenges and Rewards." We were fortunate to have three exceptional guest speakers with first-hand experience in interdisciplinary research. Each speaker reflected on the challenges and rewards of doing research involving interdisciplinary team members, shared

recommendations on how to pursue a career in intersectional work (academic and non-academic), and spoke openly about their personal journey. The Training and Capacity Building Program would like to thank Mallar Chakravarty (Team 9, Douglas Mental Health University Institute), Katherine McGilton (Theme 3 Co-Lead, University of Toronto), and Rosanne Aleong (Baycrest) for joining us.

## Published Science Day Abstracts Now Available!

Abstracts submitted for the 2018 Science Days have been published in the Canadian Geriatrics Journal. To access the abstracts online, please click [here](#).

### Trainee Poster Competition Award Recipients



All meeting attendees were invited to cast a ballot for their favourite poster in three categories: Master's, MD/PhD, and Postdoctoral Researcher. Congratulations to the following trainees

awarded best poster by popular vote:

#### Master's Category

Selena P. Maxwell, Dalhousie University, Team 4

Poster title: Characterizing Neuropathology and Cholinergic Dysfunction in the Rostral Prefrontal Cortex

#### MD/PhD Category

Claire Godard-Sebillotte, McGill University, Team 19

Poster title: Characterizing Neuropathology and Cholinergic Dysfunction in the Rostral Prefrontal Cortex

#### Postdoctoral Researchers

Melanie Bayly, University of Saskatchewan, Team 20



Poster title: A scoping review of dementia-related education and support service accessibility and use in rural areas: Barriers and promising solutions

G. Peggy McFall, University of Alberta, Team 9

Poster title: Longitudinal Analyses of Imaging Trajectories Provide Novel Insights into the Variable Dynamics of Brain Aging and Alzheimer's Disease

Finally, the Training & Capacity Building Program would like to thank all the trainees who joined us, the members of the Trainee Society Executive, the CIHR Institute of Aging for supporting the trainee travel awards, and the Alzheimer Society of Canada for their support of the Trainee Poster Award competition.



## CCNA Trainee Society

Of special note in 2018 was the founding of the CCNA Trainee Society. Thank you to the Trainee Society Executive Members

Amanpreet Badhwar (President), Lauren Bechard (Academic Coordinator), Allen McLean (Secretary-Treasurer), Bruna Seixas Lima (Communications Coordinator), Saira Mirza (Social Coordinator), and Charlene Chu (Committee Member) for volunteering their time and leadership. Accomplishments in 2018/2019 include launching a membership campaign, participating in the CCNA Conference Program Planning Committee, introducing the Trainee Society to the larger CCNA membership at the Annual Meeting in Montreal, and creating Terms of Reference to help guide the Society's activities. The T&CB Program looks forward to continued collaboration with the Trainee Society in Phase II.

### ▶ March 2019 Events

The T&CB Program would like to congratulate Trainee Society Executive Members Aman Badhwar (Montreal), Lauren Bechard (Waterloo), Saira Mirza (Toronto), and Bruna Seixas Lima (Toronto) for organizing three local events for trainees in Toronto, Waterloo, and Montreal. The Training Program thanks them for their creativity and leadership in bringing these events to CCNA investigators, trainees, and the community at large. We would like to thank the guest speakers for the Toronto event, Kathy McGilton and Howard Chertkow. Stay tuned for to highlights from these events on the CCNA website and in the next issue of The Synapse.

## Trainees in the Spotlight



To open our spotlight on trainee successes we are featuring achievements by our Executive Committee Members. We look forward to hearing from other CCNA trainees about major milestones and successes in the development of their careers. If you would like to publish your achievements or share news with the CCNA trainee community we would like to feature you in the Spotlight. Please email your submission to the T&CB Coordinator: [amanda.duncan@nshealth.ca](mailto:amanda.duncan@nshealth.ca)

**Charlene Chu, RN, PhD** has completed her term as a CCNA trainee and has accepted a tenure track position at the University of Toronto. She is now an Assistant Professor in the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing.

Her proposed research program involves design and evaluation of person-centered technological interventions targeted to the physical functioning of older adults, and will include two foci: rehabilitation for post-acute settings and supportive technologies for aging-in-place. She aims to help older adults maintain their independence, health, and quality of life (QOL) by designing technology that can solve real-world care problems.

**Amanpreet Badhwar, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Université de Montréal, Team 9** was invited to co-edit the December 2018 issue of *Interalia Magazine* titled "The Lines that Connect," following the successful Sci-Art exhibit she organized for the Sixth Biennial Conference on Resting State and Brain Connectivity meeting in 2018. Aman is also featured in an article in this issue of *Interalia Magazine* where she discusses her relationship with art and neuroscience. The article features Aman's artwork exploring the various scales of the neuroverse. To view "The Lines that Connect", please click [here](#).

**Aman was also lead author on two recent publications:**

**Badhwar A, McFall GP, Sapkota S, Chertkow H, Dixon RA, Bellec P.** Toward discovery of multiomics biotypes of Alzheimer's disease: A focused review and proposed roadmap.

**Badhwar A, Collin-Verreault Y, Orban P, Chouinard I, Vogel J, Duchesne S, Bellec P.** Multivariate consistency of resting-state fMRI connectivity maps acquired on a single individual over 2.5 years, 13 sites and 3 vendors. (preprint available at <https://doi.org/10.1101/497743>)

**Saira S. Mirza, MD, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Toronto, Team 7 & 9** was awarded the Junior Faculty Award at the International Conference on Alzheimer's & Parkinson's Diseases (AD/PD) 2019. Saira was invited to speak at the AD/PD 2019 in Lisbon this March about her research on complex interactions between cerebral small vessel disease and APOE-ε4 in Alzheimer's and Lewy body dementia patients. The Organizing Committee of AD/PD 2019 recognizes the top junior and trainee abstract presenters with Junior Faculty Awards. Title of Saira's presentation is "White matter hyperintensities and cognition in Alzheimer's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies - does APOE-ε4 modulate the association?"

## STAY CONNECTED



### How to Contact T&CB

We always want to hear from CCNA trainees, so feel free to contact us with your feedback.

#### Email

#### T&CB Program Coordinator

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#### CCNA Trainee Society

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Until next issue, thanks for reading!