

BAYCREST BULLETIN

A snapshot of Baycrest news and events - August 2021

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Baycrest Researchers Awarded Federal Grants to Support Older Adults With Hearing and Vision Loss

Thanks to over \$940,000 in funding from all three federal granting agencies - CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC - researchers at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI) will advance our understanding of ways to support older adults with hearing and vision loss, helping them to stay socially engaged and protecting their brain health as they age.

Improving listening skills in noisy environments

Many older adults have difficulty isolating relevant sounds from background noise in day-to-day communication. This puts them at risk for social isolation and increases their chances of developing dementia. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) has awarded two Baycrest scientists prestigious grants to improve our understanding of hearing and ways to preserve it as we age.

With his NSERC Discovery Grant, Dr. Björn Herrmann, Baycrest's Canada Research Chair in Auditory Aging, will improve our understanding of how age-related changes in the brain can negatively impact our ability to pay attention to relevant sounds while ignoring background noises.



Senior Scientist Dr. Claude Alain's NSERC Discovery Grant will allow him to examine how memory and prior knowledge impact a person's listening ability across different conditions. "This will pave the way to develop training programs to improve listening skills regardless of hearing level, which will ultimately help older adults stay socially connected," Dr. Alain says.

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A new, state-of-the-art auditory lab

Dr. Alain has also been awarded NSERC funding to develop a new laboratory to study the brain dynamics involved in listening. This lab will ultimately advance our understanding of links between hearing and how we understand and interact with our environment.

Protecting older adults' brain health with personal sound amplification products

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) have granted Dr. Alain's PhD student, Maxime Perron, a highly competitive three-year Doctoral Award to determine whether personal sound amplification products, which

are inexpensive alternatives to hearing aids, can mitigate cognitive decline associated with hearing in older adults with mild to moderate hearing loss.

Engaging visually impaired older adults with audiobooks and podcasts

Dr. Herrmann has received an important five-year grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to examine how individuals with vision impairment experience auditory materials such as audiobooks and podcasts. "Our findings will make it possible to maximize the beneficial social and psychological effects of leisurely reading for this group," Dr. Herrmann says.

Vaccine Champions Enjoy Perks of "Normal" Routine

"Honestly, after getting both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, I feel free," shares an elderly family member of a resident at the Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged. "I'm much less fearful now. If I want to see a friend and we've both had two shots, I'm not scared that one of us is going to infect the other."

This newly discovered courage provides a comforting backdrop for other activities reminiscent of life pre-COVID that the family member is now able to enjoy, from book club meetings to live theatre in Toronto. Notably, the "ability to more easily come into Baycrest for visits" is a major perk. "I think it's great that we can almost get back to normal life," the family member says.

The semblance of "normal life" available to COVID-19 vaccine recipients is increasingly prominent as Ontario continues to advance reopening, with many activities, such as travelling without quarantine, requiring proof of double vaccination.

"I understand why some people are hesitant about vaccination, but I believe that we have to get beyond our hesitancy," observes the family member. "The vaccine protects everyone around us, including the residents."

Resident safety has naturally remained at the forefront of Baycrest's long-term care concerns during the pandemic. Staff and resident vaccinations alike have contributed to the protection of not only resident safety, but also the overall experience, with vaccines ultimately reducing the risk of an outbreak at Baycrest, and in turn, lockdown.

Elisha Cruz, registered nurse coordinator at the Terraces of Baycrest Retirement Residence, got her second dose of the Pfizer vaccine in February. Her parents had been living with



her during the peak of the pandemic. "I didn't mind which type I received, I just wanted the vaccine," she says.

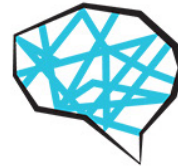
"I had a lot of concerns going in," continues Cruz, "but after reading through material and watching the news, I told myself that I needed to get (the vaccine) to protect my parents and the elderly at work." Due to her research about the vaccine, it "wasn't much of a shock" when she developed a fever and on-and-off chills after her second dose. She remarks, "I was happy that I received the second dose, and the concerns I had really faded away after that."

The "normal routine" that Cruz had before the pandemic is one she's been eager to return to, and she can do so now that she's fully vaccinated. "I'm able to safely see my sister, who I'm really close to, and my extended family," she explains. "Not to mention safe interactions with elders at the workplace. The message I try to send to my friends and colleagues is that there's no harm in getting the vaccine," Cruz says. "It helps prevent COVID-19 and adds to the greater good."

See the 2021 Edition of The Brain Project



THE BRAINS ARE BACK!



the
brain
project

Baycrest

Our annual, Foundation-run The Brain Project launched on Tuesday, July 6, with a new collection of brain sculptures on display at Nathan Phillips Square, Ontario Place under The Pavillion, Yonge + St. Clair, CF Shops at Don Mills and Yorkville Village.

The displays will last throughout the summer. Sales of the sculptures help raise funds for our research and care programs, and the charitable art installation also raises critical awareness of brain health.

To find out more about where to see the brains and to view photos and videos of some of the recently unveiled 2021 brain sculptures, please visit www.brainproject.ca.

Recognition also goes out Dr. Rosanna Olsen, scientist at the Rotman Research Institute, who has organized The Brain Project Walk/Run as a fundraising event-within-an-event. Kudos to Dr. Olsen and the participants in her walk/run this year.

Baycrest on List of World's Best Smart Hospitals 2021



Baycrest has been recognized as one of the World's Best Smart Hospitals by Newsweek. This list is comprised of the 250 medical institutions that are world leaders in the use of smart technology and that were best able to weather the storm of the COVID-19 crisis.

According to the Newsweek report, the pandemic has shown how technologies like telehealth, virtual care, robotics and access to real-time data can provide better and safer patient care, and enable hospitals to better coordinate their staff and resources. Baycrest is one of 250 medical institutions that were granted this honour.

Kudos to all staff who have been integral to delivering, incorporating and advancing Baycrest's Smart Tech for the betterment of all those in our care.

Visit www.newsweek.com/worlds-best-smart-hospitals-2021 to read the full article.

Updates, Questions and Comments

Baycrest is committed to communicating with you about COVID-19. For the most up-to-date information, please visit the intranet or www.baycrest.org and sign up to get email notifications when there are COVID-19 updates. Please also

refer to the list of Frequently Asked Questions, which we continue to update. If you have questions or comments, please email covidquestions@baycrest.org

Innovation Updates - Upcoming Webinars



New from Baycrest@Home: Discover Dance - Wednesday, August 25, 2021

In partnership with TO Live and Nova Dance, Discover Dance is a new monthly virtual event where participants meet professional dancers from various cultural backgrounds and learn new moves from the comfort of their own home! This dementia-friendly event is free and fun for the whole family. Join us on Wednesday, August 25, 2021 from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. as dancer extraordinaire Travis Knights leads a session on tap dance.

To register, go to <https://bit.ly/DiscoverDanceAug2021>



Free Online Learning Modules for Caregivers

Supported by the CareMakers Foundation, Baycrest recently launched free online learning modules, in French and English, designed to provide research-based support and education that caregivers need. The first module is about understanding and identifying family caregivers and the struggles they may face. The second module explores how caregivers can seek out support and looks at the common emotional responses that can make this challenging. To access the modules, go to <https://www.caremakers.ca/en/resources>



Dr. Jessica Cuppage - Baycrest's New Chief Medical Innovation Officer

A welcome addition to Baycrest's innovator community, Dr. Cuppage will support the development and adoption of innovations into clinical practice, education and research through a medical lens. Working across all departments and with peers in IT/e-Health and the Baycrest Innovation Office (BIO), Dr. Cuppage will act as a bridge, connecting Baycrest physicians to innovative collaborations with scientists, educators, technologists and informatics specialists.

A Walk for the Ages at Canada's Wonderland

A WALK FOR THE AGES

September 19, 2021
Canada's Wonderland



Join us on Sunday, September 19, at Canada's Wonderland for A Walk for the Ages.

Participants will walk either a 2.5 or 5 km route through the park to raise money for Baycrest's most urgent needs.

Funds raised will go towards our quest to defeat dementia while ensuring Baycrest continues to

be a world leader in ongoing care, research, education and innovation in the field of brain health and aging. Information regarding free registration for Baycrest staff can be found on the employee intranet. All participants will be expected to fundraise a minimum amount prior to the walk.

Visit www.baycrestfoundation.org for more information or to register.

Baycrest



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