

Rural Health Research NEWS

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BC Rural and Remote Health Research Network (BCRRHRN)

Submitted by **Meghan Wagler, M.Sc.**,
Network Coordinator, BCRRHRN

The BC Rural and Remote Health Research Network is a specialized network funded by the provincially based Michael Smith Health Research Foundation. The aim is to create a vibrant and innovative research foundation for informed rural health services planning and improved health for rural communities. The following highlights focus on current projects funded through or hosted by the BC Rural and Remote Health Research Network (BCRRHRN). See <http://www.bcurrhn.ca/> for further information on network activities.

The New Emerging Team for Health in Rural and Northern British Columbia (NETHRN BC), 5-year CIHR funded program objective is to build research capacity to enhance understanding of the social dimensions of rural and northern

health in order to improve the health of residents. Led by Principle Investigator Dr. Aleck Ostry based at the University of Victoria, the project is a multidisciplinary community of researchers, policy makers, and students based at four universities in the province – UVic, TRU, UNBC, and UBC. <http://nethrnbc.uvic.ca/>

Maternal Health: Drs. Jude Kornelsen and Stefan Grzybowski of the Rural Maternity Care New Emerging Team (RM-Net) have partnered with researchers at the University of Ottawa and in Nunavut to examine the possibility of using the fetal fibronectin vaginal swab test to predict the onset of labour at term. The goal for this study is to determine if expectant mothers in isolated and rural communities across Canada have the ability to find out when they will be entering into labour, allowing them to stay in their home communities for

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Also Happening in BC

Submitted by **Dr. Colleen Reid**

In addition to research taking place within the BCRRHRN, the following covers two interesting projects. The first, headed by Dr. Colleen Reid, is a four-community urban and rural project. The second is a community-based initiative seeking to develop a health research centre for the community.

Dr. Colleen Reid, Adjunct Professor at SFU and Research Director with the Women's Health Research Network, worked in four BC communities with local researchers to investigate women's involvement in the informal economy and how women's paid and unpaid work impacted their health and well-being. The outcomes to date include reports aimed at strengthening community planning, as

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Message from the Guest Editor

Revised Mission and Format for the Newsletter

The newsletter committee (Margaret Boone, Chair, and Kyle Whitfield, Deatra Walsh and Silvia Vilches) have, in discussion with the board, developed a plan to renew the mission of the newsletter and restructure the format. We hope that this will avoid duplication of information, make it easier to organize, and help members use the newsletter as a reference.

This renewal follows a motion by the Board at the AGM in Saskatoon last October where the Board adopted key points of a business plan prepared by Praxis Management. To keep the newsletter in line with our new strategic plan (see April 2008 issue), we have decided to focus on three key objectives:

1. networking on rural health research in Canada (members' benefit)
2. providing a central portal for policy and decision makers who are interested in research on rural health issues in order to promote rural health research (knowledge translation)
3. providing an avenue for those who wish to become more involved in the society to do so (encouraging membership)

The newsletter will be issued three times annually, in April, June, and December. Each issue will feature a different cycle of the Society's activities, as well as a different regional focus. Focussing on a region at a time will allow us to cover members' activities in more depth.

The focus on BC in this issue features some large health research projects, many of them connected through the BC Rural and Remote Health Research Network (BCRRHRN). The BCRRHRN is only five years old, and yet under its scientific leadership has organized a vibrant set of regional workshops and two annual conferences

to date, is offering funding including small capacity development grants for community groups, and a regular stream of webcast meetings and conferences. Their 'network approach' has begun to bear fruit, and both energizes and supports the aims other multi-site projects that are featured here.

This issue also gives notice of the upcoming AGM and conference in Kingston, as well as listing the new board elected at the October 08 AGM.

The June issue will include details of the upcoming conference in Kingston. Each year the June issue will be the last newsletter before the annual conference and so will also carry reminders for membership updates in order to qualify for the member's rates for the conference.

The December issue will review the conference and AGM. The new board will usually be listed in the December issue, and there will be a message from the executive.

We have also decided on a new, briefer format, which we will implement over the coming year. Instead of listing all details, we will provide links to our or other websites. For example, in this issue we are featuring some highlights of publications, but the entire list will be via a link to the CRHRS website, and appear as a supplement to the newsletter.

These foci will shift the content of the newsletter somewhat, and so we are interested in what you think. We hope you will take a few minutes to give us feedback and suggestions. To structure the feedback, we have created a very brief survey (9 questions) including some multiple choice, one ranking, and some questions about affiliations and where you go for information. Feedback from those who have tried it is that it only takes about 3 minutes to complete! You will find

the survey on Survey Monkey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=nONpYCnwIn_2bB_2fc2Y5ozfEg_3d_3d. It will be available until May 15th, when we will wrap it up in time for reporting in the next issue. **We need your opinion – link to survey on page 5.**

Looking ahead, our next issue (June) will feature the Prairie region, with guest editors Deatra Walsh and Margaret Boone. You can be in touch directly with them about innovations, new projects, and research results which may be of interest to the readership.

Yours sincerely,

— **Silvia Vilches**
Guest Editor

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

**Rural Life, Health,
Environment – The
Full Spectrum**

**Canadian Rural Health
Research Society**

With Collaborating Partners

**OCTOBER 15-17, 2009
KINGSTON, Ontario CANADA**

Abstracts due May 13th, 2009 – see
<http://crhrs-scrsr.usask.ca/>
for submission details

BCRRHRN

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longer. <http://www.ruralmatresearch.net/>

Rural Palliative Care Hubs: Dr. Valorie Crooks, and Dr. Nadine Schuurman based at SFU are co-leading a mixed-method study examining the potential of creating secondary palliative care hubs in under-serviced areas of the province. The hubs are conceptualized as rural/remote community sites that offer enhanced networking and knowledge exchange links with primary hubs where specialists and designated palliative teams are located. Using spatial analysis the team is examining socio-political factors that must be considered in determining hub features and locations using the findings of interviews conducted with formal and informal palliative care providers. A summary is provided at <http://en.scientificcommons.org/35517793>.

Youth Sexual Health (YSH) Team:

This a CIHR-funded Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement project is dedicated to reducing health and social inequalities for youth, particularly those living in rural and northern places. Led by Dr. Jean Shoveller, at UBC, the YSH Team investigates how gender, culture, and place affect youth sexual health. The YSH Team hired four youth to work as Youth Co-Researchers (YCRs who examined how existing policies regarding the conduct of academic research can affect young people's participation in research and opportunities for knowledge exchange, who co-created the "Know Your Rights with Research" card (available at http://learnaboutsex.ca/Your_Rights/).

Partnerships: The University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and Northern Health (NH) both face challenges in creating and sustaining capacity to meet research needs. Under the leadership of Dr. Martha McLeod and Cathy Ulrich, CEO of Northern

Health, an multiple-umbrella project has been created to determine how the practice of health professionals in rural and northern communities can best be organized, supported, and developed to provide improved access to care, and enhanced quality and sustainability of care. This partnered program currently facilitates over 20 research projects within four themes: (1) Health services and practices that ensure quality care; (2) Organizational and systems change to enhance professional practice; (3) Community-professional interactions; (4) Professional practice with vulnerable populations. See the Rural and Northern Practice and Its Development project, and a capacity building initiative, Closing the Gap at http://www.msfnr.org/sub-funding-recipients-hsprsn-profile.asp?hsprsn_id=6

Also Happening in BC

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well as various actions undertaken in the research communities.

Building a Community-based Health Research Centre

Community-university partnerships on health research are an expanding (though still limited) sphere of activity. However, community-based health research centres that are owned and operated by community members are very rare in the developed world. Aid agencies, such as Canada's IDRC do fund these types of centres overseas. A good example is in the IN-Depth network, which includes four community-based research centres in the Gambia, Africa. These institutions focus on particular problems, and partner with leading researchers world-wide to develop local capacity

to improve health services. However, principles of partnership development suggest that community ownership and control helps prioritize benefits to the community.

In the Northeast of BC, which faces the boom and bust cycles of the oil patch in the context of a rich agricultural community, a partnership has been supporting the evolution of a community-based health research centre. Key community members are engaged: Connie Kaweesi, Director of Arts and Technology and Academic transfer programs for Northern Lights College; Orland Wilkerson, northeast Liaison for UNBC, and Dr. Charl Badenhorst, M.D., Medical Officer of the Northeast, have been supporting a series of fora. The first one, in June 2008, brought together stakeholders within the health and social services sectors to identify ways of moving forward. The 2nd, held in October, 2008, solicited community perspectives on health research priorities. Moving

forward, the group has identified the health of transient workers and their families as a key issue for the region, and will begin seeking research partners and funding to focus on this issue. So far, the project has been supported by small grants from the BCRRHRN and other organizations. Contact Dr. Charl Badenhorst for further information. (submitted by Colleen Reid)

Population (Statistics Canada) and Scott's Medical Database (CIHI). Full reports were prepared for 15 health professional groups and data tables for an additional ten. As well, the *Summary Report: Distribution and Internal Migration of Canada's Health Care Workforce* provides a consolidated overview of the internal migration patterns of Canada's health professionals. These reports, in pdf format and in English or French, may be downloaded from the CIHI website: http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispPage.jsp?cw_page=AR_1749_E

Publications

Members' Publications

As we move to a new format, we will be provided links to a publications page.

See <http://crhrs-scrsr.usask.ca/> for the complete list of publications submitted by members.

Upcoming Special Edition:

Fall 2009: Look for a special edition of the Journal of Palliative Care which will feature a special thematic issue on Aboriginal Hospice Palliative Care. This issue is being sponsored by The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) and the Centre for Education and Research on Aging and Health (CERAH), Lakehead University.



Conferences of Note

Rural Health Workforce Symposium

Prince George, BC, May 31-June 1, 2009

Early registration deadline is March 31, 2009. If you need assistance with your registration, please contact BJ Gdanski at 604.739.3110 ext 222.

You may also fax the registrations to 604.739.3931. See

<http://www.ruralhealthnetbc.org> to register, and for program updates and background information and make sure to *Share Your Story*.

International Congress on Circumpolar Health

Yellowknife, NWT, Canada, July 11-16, 2009

Over 750 people will share health related research findings and program successes that will improve the quality of life for those living in circumpolar regions. Abstract submission is now closed; early bird registration closes on March 31st, 2009.

Details at: <http://arctichealth-nt.ca/icch2009>

XXIII ESRS Congress

European Society for Rural Sociology

August 17-21, 2009, Vaasa, Finland

Hosted by the European Society for Rural Sociology (ESRS) with the University of Vaasa and Åbo Akademi University. The ESRS Congress will address this critical moment through the following five key themes:

(1) Mobilities and Stabilities in Rural Space (2) The Rural Bites Back (3) Animal Farm (4) The Sciences of the Rural (5) Sustainable Ruralities. For more information:

<http://www.esrs2009.fi>

The International Rural Network Forum: *Development*

Dilemmas and Dialogues Udaipur, India, August 23rd-28th, 2009

Call for Abstracts Deadline: April 30th, 2009. For further information see:

<http://www.international-rural-network.org>

9th ACUNS International Student Conference on Northern Studies:

"Communities of Change: Building an International Polar Year Legacy"

October 2-5, 2009, Whitehorse, Yukon

Yukon College is pleased to host in partnership with the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) and the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) from For more information:

<http://www.acuns.ca/studco.htm>

Renew Your Membership!

Join or renew in time to be eligible for the members' discounts for the annual conference Kingston. If you are not a member yet, this is the time! Members agree to uphold the mission of the Society, which is:

To facilitate research and knowledge translation aimed at understanding and promoting the health of people living in rural and remote Canada.

Membership Benefits:

1. reduced registration at the Society's annual conference, and special student rate for student members
2. opportunity for dissemination of research results through the Society web site, newsletter and conferences, plus opportunities for networking with other Society members
3. tri-annual society newsletter providing updates on leading rural health research in Canada, key funding opportunities, and networking and mentoring opportunities for students.
4. participation as a voting member in the Society

To join:

Our annual membership is renewable as of the AGM in October 2009 in Kingston.

Fees:

Institutional	\$ 350
Individual	\$ 75
Student	\$ 30

Fill in the on-line form available at <http://crhrs-scrsr.usask.ca/>

Or send a cheque attn:

Canadian Rural Health Research Society
103 Hospital Drive, P.O. Box 120 R.U.H. Saskatoon, SK, S7N 0W8
Phone: (306) 966-7888/Fax: (306) 966-8378

E-mail: CRHRS-SCRSR@usask.ca

Readers' Survey

Readers' Feedback for the Newsletter Committee

We would like your feedback on ways we can improve our communication with you as members, and further the mission of the newsletter. The survey contains 9 questions, including multiple choice and ranking questions. Board members who have trialed it tell us it takes less than 5 minutes to complete – maybe only 3 minutes!

It is available on Survey Monkey until May 15th:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=nONpYCnvlN_2bB_2fc2Y5ozfFg_3d_3d

For further comments on or to add longer suggestions, e-mail svilches@shaw.ca (Silvia Vilches).

Thank you! These responses will be reviewed by the newsletter committee and reported in a later edition of the newsletter.



Rural Health Research NEWS

Publisher CRHRS

Editor Margaret Boone

Committee Members Margaret Boone
Silvia Vilches
Kyle Whitfield
Deatra Walsh

contact us / submissions



Please forward submissions to Sueli de Freitas at The Canadian Rural Health Research Society at crhrs-scrsr@usask.ca. **Next issue to focus on the prairie region, deadline for submissions May 15, 2009.**

This newsletter is available on the CRHRS website at <http://crhrs-scrsr.usask.ca/>.