MARITIME FAMILY PRACTICE RESEARCH NETWORK NEWSLETTER

**Maritime
Family Practice
Research Network**

Team

From left to right: Dr. Anders Lenskjold, Dr. Mathew Grandy (Network Director), Sarah Sabri (Data Manager), Dr. Michael Fleming, Juanna Ricketts (Patient Partner), & Dr. Fred Burge

NETWORK UPDATE

Dr. Mathew Grandy, MD, CCFP

Over the past year, MaRNet-FP has continued to evolve and grow. At the time of the last newsletter, we had began the transition from Nightingale to Med Access EMR. No one could have predicted the global pandemic, and the resulting rapid adaptations and challenges we would face in primary care. Initially, research was paused and attention was shifted to securing safe and effective patient care throughout the pandemic. As our COVID numbers waned we have been able to re-engage in research and continue to develop and grow MaRNet-FP. We have been re-consenting all our previous sentinel providers and recruiting new providers over the past 6 months or so.

We have a number of projects underway, including a randomized control trial looking at quality improvement coaching and polypharmacy, the development of a case definition for chronic opioid therapy, and a study looking at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on community primary care delivery.

Once again, I'd like to thank all our sentinels for their ongoing support of the network. Despite the pandemic, practices have continued to volunteer to participate in research projects and more practices continue to join the network as we forge ahead.

Opportunities to Participate in Research

JOIN THE SPIDER STUDY

MaRNet-FP is currently recruiting physicians and nurse practitioners to SPIDER: A Research and QI Collaboration Supporting Practices in Improving Care for Complex Elderly Patients. Primary care providers participating in the study are randomly sorted into the control or intervention arm of the study.

Control Arm
• Complete baseline survey
• Complete 2nd survey after 12 months
• Invite 10% of your patients who meet study criteria to participate in a survey

Intervention Arm
• Complete baseline survey
• Attend/watch three 1.5-hour workshops
• Communicate monthly with quality improvement coach
• Participate in a 1-hour focus group after 1 year
• Recruit 10% of participating patients to a survey
• Invite 10% of participants who completed a survey, to participate in a short interview

Interested in participating in SPIDER?
Email us at marnetfp@dal.ca

HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD WITH THE PUPPY-STUDY!

Family physicians are invited to share their important insights and experiences caring for patients during COVID-19 in a flexible 1-1.5 hour interview as part of pan-Canadian studies led by Dr. Emily Gard Marshall. Interviews may be done in one or more sessions, as per your preference.

Your **one interview** will contribute to **two studies**: "**P**roblems Coordinating and Accessing Primary Care for Attached and **U**nattached **P**atients Exacerbated During the COVID-19 **P**andemic **Y**ear" (PUPPY) and **P**andemic **P**lanning for **P**rimary **C**are: Lessons from Four Provinces (3PC).

An honorarium supported by Doctors NS will be provided for your time.
Please contact egmresearch@dal.ca or 902-491-5893 for further details.

Here's what participants are saying:

"That was like therapy."

"That was fun!"

Twitter: @PUPPY_Study
E-mail: puppy@dal.ca
Phone: 902-491-5893

Newsletter

The MaRNet-FP newsletter will be sent to sentinels twice a year. The newsletters will include updates about ongoing research projects, opportunities to participate in research, and lessons learned from MaRNet-FP and CPCSSN research.

If there is something you would like added to the next newsletter, please let us know at
marnetfp@dal.ca

MaRNet-FP Advisory Committee

MaRNet-FP is in the process of creating an advisory committee to increase opportunities for research and grow our network. Committee members will review and advise on research proposals and policies, grant applications, and the strategic plan, mission, and vision of MaRNet-FP.

We are looking for a physician or nurse practitioner from each zone to join the advisory committee. If you would like to join the committee, please email us at marnetfp@dal.ca.

New Network Manager

Keri Harvey joined MaRNet-FP in September of last year. She is a recent graduate of the Master's in Applied Health Services Research Program at Saint Mary's University.

Keri was hired as a quality improvement coach for the SPIDER study and will be taking over as network manager as Dr. Anders Lenskjold steps away from the role to study radiology and AI at the University of Copenhagen. Dr. Lenskjold will continue to be part of the MaRNet-FP team as a data mining consultant. We wish him the best with his doctoral studies.

COMPLETED PROJECTS
FRAILTY

The frailty project that aimed to validate a case definition of frailty using primary care data has been submitted for publication and should be published later this year.

ONGOING PROJECTS
OPIOID

A local project being led by Dr. Mathew Grandy is working to validate a case definition for chronic opioid use within primary care EMR data. Following this we will do descriptive work, applying the definition to the provincial MaRNet dataset with the hope that we can eventually aid in informing practitioners about high-risk patients in their practices and long-term risk reduction for these patients. This work was paused in part during the pandemic but has since resumed. As a result of the pause, a subsequent paper has been developed highlighting issues in utilizing EMR data for research. Specifically, the issues around using prescription data as entered into the EMR by primary care providers were explored.

TESTING AND OVERTESTING: USING MARNET-FP DATA TO HELP

Diagnostic overtesting is not always beneficial for patients or providers. For patients, we can potentially do more harm by labelling and overtreating them with further unnecessary health services. For the provider, possible overuse of health services may reduce availability for other patients. Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) testing is among "Choosing Wisely Canada's" list of "Thirteen Things Physicians and Patients Should Question". For his master's thesis study, Dr. Anders Lenskjold will use MaRNet-FP data to explore the extent of TSH testing, its possible overtesting and the consequences in NS for patients and primary care providers.

PANDEMIC PRIMARY CARE: HOW DO WE GET CARE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT?

We are analyzing EMR data collected before and during the pandemic from MaRNet-FP participants to understand patient visit patterns and how they've changed over the last year. Not only will we use standard statistical descriptions, but we are excited, that for the first time, we will be using machine learning to identify characteristics of patients at risk who were not previously meeting this categorization. The results will shed light on the type of patients seen in-person or virtually and those who were not seen by their primary care provider. The overarching goal of this study is to deliver the best possible care in Nova Scotia to at-risk patients. The results of the study are expected to be published in the spring of 2021.

Maritime Family Practice Research Network

CPCSSN RCSSSP
Canadian Primary Care Sentinel Surveillance Network
Réseau canadien de surveillance sentinelle en soins primaires

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