

HEADLINES

News from the Department of Psychiatry at Dalhousie University

FEATURE ► COVER STORY

Bipolar Disorder: risk and burden

Dr. Martin Alda wins Douglas Utting Prize for contributions to bipolar disorder research



Mr. Tim Utting presents Dr. Martin Alda with the 2015 Douglas Utting Prize (Photo: Jorge Martinez).

Dr. Martin Alda has been interested in two questions related to major psychiatric disorders: their risk and their burden. The Killam Chair in Mood Disorders, psychiatrist and professor in the Department of Psychiatry has dedicated his life to the study of bipolar disorder and has made remarkable contributions to the field. He's held millions of dollars

in research funding, has published over two hundred papers and given hundreds of national and international presentations. But it all comes down to those two questions: risk and burden.

In summer 2015 Dr. Martin Alda learned he was the recipient of the Douglas Utting Prize, an award

presented to a person or group working in Canada who has made major contributions to promoting the awareness of depression and/or suicide and/or to advancing the understanding and treatment of depression. The following November, as part of being awarded this prize, he gave a public lecture in Montreal on the risk of suicide behaviour in

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Message from the Head

Our cover story in this issue of *Headlines* recognizes one of our four academic chairs, **Dr. Martin Alda**, who was recently honoured with the Douglas Utting Award. It is noteworthy that **Dr. Allan Abbass** was the recipient of this award in 2013, and thus two of our senior clinician researchers have recently received the Douglas Utting Award for their important work in depression.

Dr. Alda is the epitome of a clinician researcher, demonstrating excellence in both his scientific endeavours and his clinical work. I have often sought his advice in the management of patients with refractory or otherwise difficult-to-treat mood disorders. His research on the genetics of bipolar disorder has lately been published in the world's leading medical and scientific journals. Dr. Alda is a most deserving recipient of this award.

Dr. Abbass's work is also being widely recognized, and has been instrumental in the introduction of intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy (ISTDP) in many parts of the developed world.

You will also find in these pages a profile of another excellent clinical researcher in the department, **Dr. Penny Corkum**, who is an expert in sleep disorders in children.

We are very fortunate to have these and a number of other leading clinical researchers in our department – they create new knowledge, allow us to offer the most up-to-date care to our patients, and inspire our students.

I would like to welcome **Ms. Annette Cossar** to her new role as research administrator, which she adds to her existing position of education



Dr. Nick Delva

administrator. Ms. Cossar is the longest standing member of our administrative staff, upon which the smooth and effective running of our department depends. Thanks for your many years of service, Annette!

Please keep in mind our Faculty Development Fund, which is aimed at strengthening our collective strength as a department. Our director of finance and administration, **Ms. Carolyn Sisley**, provides an overview of the criteria and examples of some recent awards.

We were happy to hear very recently that we filled our seven entry positions in the first round of CaRMS – the details of our new PGY-1 class, who will graduate in 2021, will be provided in the next issue of *Headlines*. I would like to thank all those who worked hard to make this a successful match.

Finally, I will draw your attention to the photo feature by **Dr. Shabbir Amanullah**, whose excellent and original work we have been featuring in *Headlines* for some years now. Dr. Amanullah's photographic art is, without a doubt, among the best I have ever seen, and I always look forward to seeing his latest contribution!

Douglas Utting Prize *continued from page 1*

people with bipolar disorder. Bipolar disorder has the highest risk of suicide and suicide attempts in this population have high mortality. "This is probably because the genetic risk for suicide in people with bipolar disorder partly overlaps with the genetic risk for bipolar disorder itself, as we found in two separate family studies," says Dr. Alda. "On the positive side, several research groups, including ours, have shown that lithium has a specific antisuicidal effect."

Dr. Alda and his team have been studying the role of genetic factors predisposing to bipolar disorder, its response to treatment, as well as factors that affect the long-term outcome, such as suicide or medical co-morbidities. To this end, he and his colleagues use a combination of approaches that include genetic association analysis, genome sequencing, and various cellular phenotypes of bipolar disorder and of response to lithium. He stresses the importance of the longitudinal aspect of their work, something he says is recognized as essential by many, but is rarely done. He and his colleagues have shown that patients who respond to long term lithium

treatment suffer from a distinct, highly heritable form of bipolar disorder that can be differentiated through their symptoms, family histories, and neurobiological and molecular findings. Dr. Alda's success has recently been highlighted in some very prestigious publications in *The Lancet* and *Nature*.

Dr. Alda has built his career in a research area that until recently was one of the most poorly resourced fields in academic medicine. His success is now paving the way for international psychiatric genetics to make a substantive advance, particularly in understanding the genetics of mood disorders, lithium responsiveness and suicide. He has done this while maintaining and running a large clinical program, and in turn, directly touching the lives of thousands of patients.

Dr. Alda has also worked tirelessly to foster the next generation of psychiatrists. His colleagues describe him as, "one of those academic superstars who always has time to support a junior colleague or provide feedback to a peer." He has mentored countless researchers throughout his career, many of them making significant contributions to medicine.

He also led to the effort to establish the Canada Research Chair in Early Intervention at Dalhousie and the successful recruitment of **Dr. Rudolf Uher** to this position.

The Douglas Utting Prize is given in honour of the late Douglas Utting, who suffered from depression and died in 1985. His family established the Douglas Utting Foundation in his memory. Dr. Alda epitomizes excellence as a clinician scientist in the areas of depression and suicide. He was able to meet the Utting family in November when he received his award, something he recalls fondly. "It is a great honour to receive this award and I am so glad to have been able to meet the members of the Utting family and acknowledge their contribution to research and to reducing the stigma of mental illness." Dr. Alda's remarkable scientific contributions and unremitting work on the study of bipolar disorder distinguish him as worthy of recognition. We congratulate him on this great honour. For more information on Dr. Alda's excellent work please visit <http://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/research/mood-disorders.html>.

Research Report

BY ANNETTE COSSAR, ADMINISTRATOR, EDUCATION & RESEARCH

upcoming internal funding opportunities

NSHRF Establishment Grant – March 10, 2016

NSHRF Development/Innovative Grant – March 10, 2016

NSHA Research Fund Spring Competition – March 15, 2016

Department of Psychiatry Research Fund – April 4, 2016

IWK/NSHA TRIC Healthcare Improvement Research Program – May 2, 2016

department of psychiatry research day 2016

This year's event is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 14 at the Lord Nelson Hotel. Now in its 26th year, Psychiatry Research Day promotes student involvement in research and showcases the department's diverse expertise to our university

and local communities. This year we will be giving presentation awards for undergraduate, graduate, resident, junior faculty/post-doctoral fellow and psychiatry staff member.

Applications to present at this year's Research Day will be distributed

in May with registration starting in August.

For more information on Research Day 2016, please contact **Jennifer Brown** at Jen.Brown@nshealth.ca

meet a researcher: dr. penny corkum

This issue profiles Dalhousie PhD researcher **Dr. Penny Corkum**. *Meet a Researcher* is a recurring article in the Research Section of *Headlines*. If you are interested in being profiled in an upcoming publication, please contact **Jen Brown** at Jen.Brown@nshealth.ca.

Current research interests: My research falls into two broad areas – pediatric sleep and children with neurodevelopmental disorders. In both of these areas I am interested in improving the quality of life of children and their families through better understanding the factors that influence adjustment, how best to conduct assessments, and developing evidence-based interventions. Over the last five years I have focused much of my time on web-based interventions which have the potential to help address many of

the barriers to treatment.

Research projects I'm currently participating in: We have a few exciting projects happening right now. In the area of pediatric sleep, we are developing and evaluating a web-based behavioural intervention for insomnia in children ages one-10 years (funded by CIHR). The program, called *Better Nights, Better Days* will be completed by parents and will help them learn new skills and strategies to address their child's difficulties with

bedtime resistance, sleep onset problems, night awakenings and early morning awakenings, as well as naptime problems. We are developing a program that we hope will be sustainable in the future so that Canadian parents will have a resource to turn to when confronted with this prevalent problem. Recruitment will begin soon and more information can be found: <http://betternightsbetterdays.ca/site/about-the-sleep-study>.

We have also recently received

funding from NeuroDevNet to modify this intervention for children with neurodevelopmental disorders, including children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), and cerebral palsy (CP). We hope to launch this randomized controlled trial (RCT) in 2017!

Another research project in the area of sleep examines the impact of sleep restriction (one hour less time in bed for five nights) in both typically developing children and children with ADHD. We are examining how sleep restriction impacts the children's emotional, cognitive and behavioural functioning. We are also examining whether sleep problems predict the effectiveness of medication used to treat ADHD. This is the second of a series of studies that we have conducted in the chronobiology lab at the Abbie J. Lane Building (QEII Hospital Site). We have had children sleeping in this facility (which **Dr. Ben Rusak** so kindly lends us and **Dr. Margaret Rajda** interprets all the studies) for over seven years. More than 40 staff that have worked on these projects, and hopefully some of these students and trainees will pursue careers in the field of sleep!

In terms of our research related to neurodevelopmental disorders, we were recently awarded a CIHR eHIPP grant to develop and test a number of modules for teachers to learn how to work with children with ADHD, learning disabilities (LD), and ASD. During the next academic year we will run a Canada-wide RCT to evaluate the effectiveness of our Teacher Help program. Part of the focus of this grant is to engage a partner who will then commercialize this product.



Dr. Penny Corkum works with a patient in the sleep lab.

A typical "Day in My Work Life":

Hmm...I should say that I sleep eight hours a night, exercise every day, and always eat healthy foods. However, the fact is that running a number of large research projects while also doing clinical work (I direct an ADHD Clinic at the Colchester East Hants ADHD Clinic) and teaching (right now I am teaching 150 students about child psychopathology) takes up a large amount of my time. I am fortunate though, as I truly believe that my work is my recreation! I also make time to walk my beautiful dog, Yuki, in the woods at least three times a week and to spend quality time with my family and friends...oh, and travel to somewhere nice at least once a year. Over the last few years I have been to Hawaii, Iceland, Italy and England. It is a good life!

What I wish I'd known (but didn't) when I first contemplated becoming a researcher: There are so many things that I don't know where to start. I was lucky to have great training and mentorship so I felt confident about understanding the research process. I never thought however, that I would also need

to know about human resources, business, procurement, intellectual property, fundraising, management, finances, etc. It has been a steep learning curve and I expect that this will continue throughout my career. It keeps the work exciting and interesting, to say the least!

The most satisfying and frustrating aspects of doing research:

I love that I work with children and families and am able to make a difference in their lives. While I get this from my clinical work, I feel that through research I can reach even more children and families, which is really exciting. Using the internet to provide interventions to help a large number of children is very rewarding. While there are many frustrations, these are less than the satisfaction derived from being a scientist-practitioner. Probably the most frustrating part of my research is the time delays that happen that delay the progress of a project. There are a lot of checks and balances that have to be in place and while these are important they also slow things down, which can be hard when you want to get to the stage where the products of your research

are being used in day-to-day life.

My research mentor: I have been fortunate to have many mentors throughout my career...some formal mentors and others informal mentors. I was given top-notch training by my many research supervisors, including my PhD supervisors – Rosemary Tannock and Harvey Moldofsky, my master’s degree supervisors – Russell Schachar and Linda Siegel, and my BSc Honours

supervisor Susan Bryson. Many of these supervisors, particularly Susan, Rosemary and Russell, have continued to provide guidance and support to me over my career! When starting at Dalhousie, I was very fortunate to have **Drs. Ben Rusak** and **Patrick McGrath** as mentors; they both have taught me lots and opened up many doors for me! Informally, I have learned a great deal from my colleagues – Drs. Isabel

Smith and **Christine Chambers** jump out to me but there are many more... and of course, some of the best mentors are those you mentor, including my students and clinical supervisees.

My second career choice: An electrician! Unsure how researcher and electrician are linked but both require problem-solving and both can give you a bad shock if you make an error!

Education Report

BY ANNETTE COSSAR, ADMINISTRATOR, EDUCATION & RESEARCH

NEW FACULTY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ENDOWMENT FUND ESTABLISHED FOR DR. ROBERT AND STELLA WEIL

The Weil fund was established in 2003 by Stella Weil to honour her late husband, Dr. Robert Weil. The fund was to provide an opportunity to foster resident interest in the area of psychotherapy, with an annual competition for funding to attend psychotherapy-focused conferences or course offerings.

This is awarded annually at the June end-of-year party. With the passing of Stella Weil in 2012, a bequest from her estate added further funding support to promote psychotherapy in the department. Two faculty professional development opportunities are available through an application process for faculty

wishing to organize psychotherapy training events in the department or faculty interested in attending a psychotherapy course, traineeship or conference. Please contact **Annette Cossar** at 902-473-2507 or annette.cossar@nshealth.ca for details.

undergraduate news

There are currently two opportunities for medical students to win support for travel costs to either the *psychSIGN National Conference*, held in conjunction with APA, in Atlanta in May or *the Association of*

Academic Psychiatry conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico in September. Details can be found on the department’s website under ‘News and Events.’

2016/17 recruitment continues for faculty tutors with many opportunities still available. Please contact **Mandy Esliger** at Mandy.Esliger@nshealth.ca to confirm your undergraduate teaching activities.

postgraduate news

The postgraduate program has begun planning the 2016 annual departmental orals and STACER exams for the residents. The orals for the PGY-2s and PGY-3s will be held on April 22 and 29, and STACERs will be held on May 6, May 13, and June 10. Faculty will receive an invitation in the next several weeks to act as assessors for these very important evaluations. For those who are invited to be STACER assessors, a separate invitation will be sent requesting participation in a STACER assessor workshop. This workshop will serve to standardize expectations of performance for residents at a

PGY-4/5 level of training. Please note that all dates are subject to change.

The postgraduate curriculum subcommittee will soon start planning the formal curriculum for the 2016-2017 academic year. It is anticipated that some minor adjustments will be made to the curriculum based on resident feedback and updated Royal College standards. Once a draft has been produced, requests will be sent to faculty as soon as possible with specific dates for teaching. Thank you to all faculty who facilitated resident teaching sessions in 2015-2016 – your teaching is greatly appreciated!

We are very pleased to announce we have filled all seven positions in the residency program in round one of the CaRMS match, with four matches coming from Dalhousie graduates. A big thank you to everyone that participated in this year's CaRMS events. A total of 67 candidates were interviewed over three days, which is a record for the program. Thanks to the efforts of our administrative staff, residents, and faculty, each day ran very smoothly and clearly demonstrated the strengths of our program.

continuing education news

XXVII W. O. MCCORMICK ACADEMIC DAY APRIL 29, 2016

The program has been finalized for XXVII W.O. McCormick Academic Day. The event will be held on Friday April 29, 2016 at the Lord Nelson Hotel Halifax NS on the theme *Psychotherapies in clinical practice: a potpourri*.

Online registration, provided by eSourceEvent, opened on March 1 and was sold out within two weeks!

This is certain to be another outstanding Academic Day with presentations on a wide range of topics from both internationally and locally recognized experts in the field.

Invited Keynote Speakers:

Stefan G. Hofman, Ph.D., professor, Department of Psychology, Boston University; director, Psychotherapy and Emotion Research Laboratory.

Topic: "Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in the Treatment of Anxiety Disorders"

Anne Marie Mahoney, Ph.D., R. Psych., F.CGPA, Calgary. *Topic: "When is a Group not a Group? The Fundamentals of Group Therapy"*

Local Speakers:

Topic: "An Introduction to the Third Wave of Cognitive Behavioural Therapies: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy; Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and Mindfulness-Based Approaches"

- **Dr. Jacqueline Cohen**, assistant professor, Department of Psychiatry, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience
- **Dr. Dayna Lee-Baggley**, clinical psychologist, Community Mental Health
- **Dr. David Whitehorn**, assistant

professor, Department of Psychiatry

Topic: "Motivational Interviewing: Fundamental Skills for Working with People"

- **Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak**, assistant professor, Department of Psychiatry
- **Dr. Selene Etches**, assistant professor, Department of Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Division
- **Scott Janssen**, MSW, social worker, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Central Zone Mental Health and Addictions Program

Topic: "Training in Psychotherapy: A Supervisor's Perspective"

- **Dr. Jackie Kinley**, associate professor, Department of Psychiatry

Topic: "Training in Psychotherapy: A Trainee's Perspective"

- **Dr. Marie Claire Bourque** PGY 5,

Department of Psychiatry

Topic: "Psychotherapy Services for Complex and Refractory Populations: Direct Evaluation and Management of Treatment Resistance in Psychiatric

Patients"

• **Dr. Allan Abbass**, professor, Department of Psychiatry, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience

Topic: "Psychotherapy Services for Complex and Refractory Populations: Tailoring Psychotherapy to the Needs of Individuals"

• **Dr. Joel Town**, assistant professor, Department of Psychiatry

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

University Rounds

On February 17, Dr. Tomas Paus, Tanenbaum Chair in Population Neuroscience; University of Toronto and senior scientist Rotman Research Institute gave an interesting presentation on recent findings in neuroscience pertinent to schizophrenia.



Dr. Tomas Paus

UPCOMING CONTINUING EDUCATION EVENTS

Clinical Academic Rounds

- March 2 Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: **Dr. Sabina Abidi**
- March 16 Clinical Academic Rounds: **Dr. Rudolf Uher**
- March 23 Clinical Academic Rounds: Addictions Services
- March 30 **Dr. Andrea Chernin**: East Coast Forensic Hospital
- April 6 Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: **Dr. David Lovas**
- April 13 Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: **Drs. John Aspin & Normand Carrey**
- April 27 **Dr. Mutiat Sulyman** & the Dual Diagnosis Program

University Rounds

- March 9 Dr. Gustavo Turecki, McGill University
- April 20 Dr. Paul Kurdyak, University of Toronto-CAMH

Workshops for faculty

March 31, 2016: **Dr. Mark Bosma & Dr. Cheryl Murphy** will be giving a two-hour workshop titled *How to Write Good Quality MCQs*. Space is limited to 15 participants and open to Department of Psychiatry faculty members only. For more information or to register, please contact **Tracy Fraser MacIsaac** at Tracy.Fraser@nshealth.ca.

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

BY MICHELLE LEBLANC, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER

The work and opinions of **Drs. Alexa Bagnell** and **Stan Kutcher** were highlighted in a January 12 CBC News article titled *Cutting and self-harm can be a 'decision for life'* outlining the dangers of self-harm in youth. Drs. Bagnell and Kutcher emphasized the increase of self-harm behaviours presenting in

youth populations and the need for increased care for these individuals. To read the complete article please visit: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/self-harm-cutting-youth-nova-scotia-1.3399484>

The Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry would like to congratulate two staff members: **Dr. David Lovas**

who has successfully passed the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) Child Psychiatry board examinations in December and **Dr. Jonathan Brake**, who has taken over as Head of Inpatient Psychiatry on the Garron Centre effective Dec. 1, 2015.

Report from the Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health

BY DR. STAN KUTCHER, SUN LIFE FINANCIAL CHAIR IN ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

mental health on air: healthy minds, resilient communities halifax launch

On January 23, community members and local leaders in youth mental health gathered at Halifax Central Library's Paul O'Regan Hall for the Halifax launch of *Mental Health On Air: Healthy Minds, Resilient Communities*. The event, presented in partnership with Farm Radio International, focused on an innovative youth depression intervention (funded by Grand Challenges Canada) in Malawi and Tanzania, where two radio shows, along with school-based listening clubs, teacher mental health curriculum training and community health care worker training, are

helping to foster the next generation of young leaders and to provide, for the first time, stigma reduction and access to mental health care for young people in these countries.

Journalist Omar Dabaghi-Pacheco took a leave of absence from CBC Ottawa to travel to Tanzania and Malawi and see just how an entertaining radio program can tackle the stigma of mental illness and engage youth in a discussion about depression. His documentary, *Mental Health On Air: Healthy Minds, Resilient Communities*, has now been screened in Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax.

After screening the film in Halifax, the audience of more than 150 attendees were invited to engage in a discussion on mental health in Malawi, Tanzania and Canada. **Dr. Stan Kutcher** and Farm Radio's Heather Gilberds were onsite to answer questions about the program and its overwhelming success to date.

Anyone interested in further information about this work can contact Kate Elliot, communications coordinator at the Sun Life Financial Chair, at kate.elliott@iwk.nshealth.ca.

tokyo university delegation visits nova scotia

From January 25 to 29, Dr. Stan Kutcher and his team welcomed a delegation from Tokyo University to learn about school mental health initiatives in the province. Community partners from across the Halifax Regional Municipality came together to deliver a broad overview of the school-based mental health approaches available in Nova Scotia.

Beginning with a meeting with the Department of Education, the delegation was able to gain an understanding of the system at a provincial level. This was followed by a reception, where all participating partners were invited to join the team in welcoming the delegation to Nova Scotia.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, partners from the Halifax Regional School Board, IWK Health Centre and Nova Scotia Health Authority took the time to present on youth mental health at a school level, along with the major strides that have been made over the past decade. This presentation was



Dr. Stan Kutcher and three members of the Tokyo University team, sporting their Dalhousie hats, at a Welcome Reception for the delegation.

followed by two school tours – at Rockingstone Heights School and Sackville High School – where the delegation was able to view concrete examples of these initiatives in action. From there, the team was invited to a lunch-and-learn style presentation at Mount Saint Vincent University's education department to gain understanding of how mental health literacy is being promoted at a pre-service teacher level.

With great support from community partners, the delegation was able to gain an in-depth understanding of youth mental health in our school systems – something that they hope to someday implement in their region. The team is looking forward to collaborating with Tokyo University on a joint Canada-Japan collaboration and are now developing plans for how this can proceed in the near future.

youth depression in malawi and tanzania

Depression and mental illness affect youth regardless of where they live. Youth depression is a concern often not well addressed – both in Canada and in developing countries like Malawi and Tanzania.

Two radio shows, along with school-

based listening clubs, are helping to foster the next generation of leaders of Malawi and Tanzania by starting a discussion on the difficult topic of depression and mental health. Additionally, training of teachers to recognize youth with possible mental health problems and community

health care workers to diagnose and properly treat depression is the focus of this work.

The following one-pager describes the progress to-date in improving youth mental health in Malawi and Tanzania as part of this project.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF YOUTH DEPRESSION IN MALAWI AND TANZANIA

RESULTS TO DATE IN MALAWI AND TANZANIA

12

“Master Facilitators” have gained expertise in adolescent mental health training program delivery.

40

Health workers have developed competencies as adolescent mental health trainers.

200+

Primary health providers able to identify and treat adolescent Depression in primary care settings.

400+

Teachers demonstrate improved knowledge and attitudes as a result of mental health curriculum training.

4

Radio stations have aired more than 200 hours of radio programming, reaching an estimated 500,000 youth.

30k+

Youth have participated in the radio program through mobile phones.

1k+

Youth have been treated for Depression with medication or effective helping.

3k+

Youth have talked to teachers about concerns with their mental health or that of a friend or family member.

15k+

Youth reached in their schools with information about mental health from their teachers.

Heather Gilberts

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Faculty Development Fund

BY CAROLYN SISLEY, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Were you aware that the Department of Psychiatry has a Faculty Development Fund, which is made available to all AFP physicians and to non-physician faculty with an appointment greater or equal to 0.50 FTE.? The fund provides support for faculty who wish to further develop their skills in a way that can be used to enhance our research, education, and/or clinical work.

What kind of activity would be eligible for funding? Some examples are:

- Royal College skills training;
- Training for new models of service delivery;
- Measurement and rater training;
- Post secondary education in a defined area of education or research that would enhance our education and research productivity;
- Courses that improve clinical delivery by providing a new skill within the department that has been identified as needed by the department head and clinical directors;
- Primary presenter at a conference that will enhance the reputation of the department.

Each year the department funds several physicians who apply for support. Applications are reviewed by

the finance committee and a rating system is used to determine the level of funding provided. All applications require a supporting letter from either the director of education for education related training, the director of research for research related training, or the clinical director for clinical related training. Support letters will inform the committee if the training area is a priority for the department and how it will be used in the department.

The department has recently funded the following faculty members:

Dr. Keri Leigh Cassidy: Dr. Cassidy received funds that provided financial assistance for her to attend the University of California, San Diego Think Tank on Healthy Aging. She attended the conference in San Diego, California, from June 19-21, and then again in November 2015.

Dr. Ezio Dini: Dr. Dini was presented with funds to assist the cost of attending the Third World Association of Psycho-Social Rehabilitation, European Congress in Torino, Italy. The congress took place on May 15-16, 2015 and focused on the medical and psycho-social rehabilitation of people suffering from severe and persistent mental illness, with a slant on the effects of recent demographic, political and economic changes in Europe.

Dr. Jason Morrison: Dr. Morrison was given funds to assist with the costs to attend and present at the fall 2015 Canadian Psychiatric Association meeting. He presented on the work that had been done in 2015 on the Clinical Pathways Project. The meeting took place from Oct. 1-3, 2015 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Dr. Joseph Sadek: Dr. Sadek was awarded funds to attend the Harvard Medical School Global Clinical Scholars Research Training. The training took place between June 2014 and June 2015.

If you have a future training opportunity and would like to apply for Faculty Development funding, please visit the department's website (<http://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/for-faculty-staff/faculty-development.html>) for an application and criteria information. Completed applications or questions can be directed to **Carolyn Sisley** at Carolyn.Sisley@nshealth.ca.

Meet a Staff Member

Meet a Staff Member allows you to be introduced to all the members of our administrative staff. It was brought to our attention that some faculty don't know who we are or what we do to support them and we'd like to change that! In this issue we introduce you to **Annette Cossar**.

annette cossar: education and research administrator

Annette is the administrator for education and research in the Department of Psychiatry. She has been with the department for 24 years. She has only recently taken over the research portfolio, as reported in the administrative news.

Annette is responsible for overseeing, coordinating and managing all administrative aspects related to education programs and research activities within the Department of Psychiatry including financial management, human resource management, as well as technical and operational management. She works closely with the various directors and support staff to ensure the department's education and research goals and objectives are met. Annette often liaises with individuals at various teaching sites and hospitals, other departments at Dalhousie, industry representatives, as well as national and international academic institutions and agencies.

If you have any questions regarding our education and research programs, contact Annette who is located on the 8th floor at the Abbie J. Lane Building and can be reached at 902-473-2507 or by email at Annette.Cossar@nshealth.ca.



Annette Cossar

news from the department

DRS. SHERRY STEWART, SELENE ETCHES AND PHIL TIBBO PRESENT ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

On Friday, Jan. 15 the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) opened a Canadian tour to share warnings about the effects of marijuana on young people in Halifax. Faculty members **Drs. Sherry Stewart, Phil Tibbo and Selene Etches** participated in a panel discussion on the topic. This panel discussion were stimulated by a CCSA report that was released in June which addressed the issue of cannabis use in adolescence. Dr. Tibbo reported that current research indicates that cannabis use in adolescence poses a different and significant risk on the adolescent brain compared to adults, in part due to the role of the endocannabinoid system in brain development at this life stage. Drs. Stewart and Etches also contributed, with Dr. Stewart debunking some myths about cannabis and youth, including the number of youth who smoke weed. It is a common misconception that all teens are smoking it, when in fact only 20-25 per cent have used it in the last year.

The report that was released in June by the CCSA indicated that regular cannabis use early in life can result in behavioural and cognitive impairments, including poor academic performance and deficits in attention, information processing and memory. Drs. Tibbo, Stewart and Etches will be part of future panel discussions across Canada.

The Halifax panel discussions attracted widespread coverage in many national media outlets. The Canadian Press story was featured on the websites for The Globe and Mail, CBC, CTV, Metro News, and Global News. In addition to print success, broadcast exposure was outstanding with numerous radio stations across the country publicizing the panel's findings. Regional exposure was also significant with top hits on CTV Atlantic Morning Live, Global Maritimes Evening News, CTV Evening News and a print piece in The Chronicle Herald.

Metronews: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2016/01/14/panel->

warning-of-marijuana-s-effects-on-young-people-begins-tour-in-halifax.html

GlobalNews: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2455920/campaign-warning-of-marijuanas-effects-on-young-people-kicks-off-in-halifax/>

GlobeandMail: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/federally-funded-agency-tours-canada-to-warn-youth-about-marijuana/article28210045/>

CTV: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/health/halifax-panel-seeks-to-dispel-myths-on-marijuana-s-effects-on-youth-1.2738997>

Le Devoir: <http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/actualites-en-societe/460364/un-centre-lance-une-tournee-nationale-pour-defaire-les-mythes-sur-la-marijuana>

For more information please visit <http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/newsevents/Pages/default.aspx>.

DR. STAN KUTCHER APPOINTED AS TECHNICAL ADVISOR IN MENTAL HEALTH TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN MALAWI

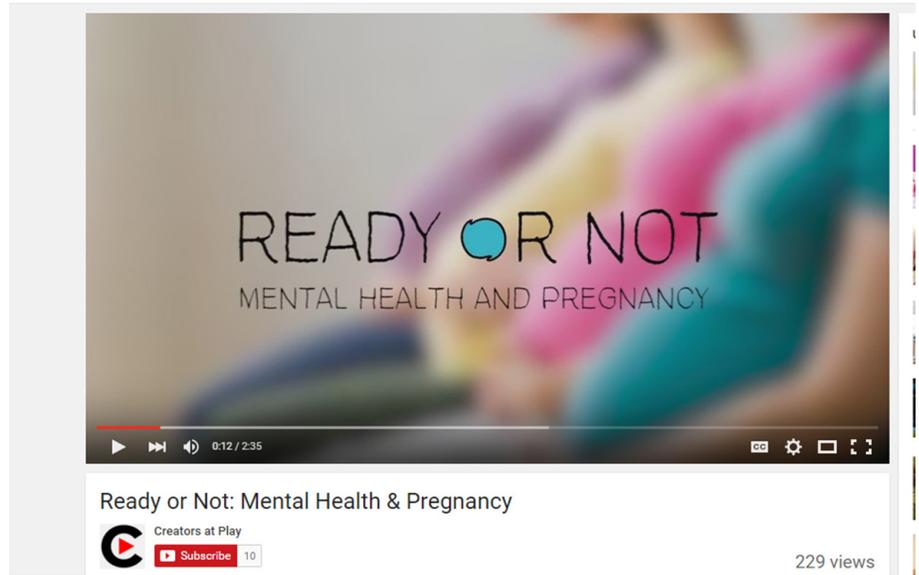
Dr. Stan Kutcher was recently appointed as Technical Advisor in Mental Health to the Ministry of

Health in Malawi. Following his recent project in adolescent depression based in Malawi, he has been asked

to assist in the development of their mental health policy this year.

DR. NORMAND CARREY AND CREATORS AT PLAY LAUNCH YOUTUBE VIDEO

In late December **Dr. Normand Carrey** and *Creators at Play*, a collective of videographers, designers, and musicians dedicated to sharing unique stories, launched a YouTube video called *Ready or not: mental health and pregnancy*. It is known that how a mother feels about herself during pregnancy already starts affecting her future view of the baby even before he/she is born. Dr. Carrey and his team wanted to produce a straightforward video that appealed to mothers, especially young mothers, in a medium (animation in a YouTube format) that they would have access to and find easily understandable. The producers of this video are simply a group of individuals brought



together for this common purpose. It was launched with this idea in mind, and released on YouTube Dec. 25, 2015. You can view the video

here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Co4jKXp1gp8>.

DEPARTMENT MEMBERS STRONGLY FEATURED IN FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE OF DOCTORS NOVA SCOTIA MAGAZINE

Subscribers to *doctorsNS*, the official magazine of Doctors Nova Scotia, saw **Dr. Sabina Abidi's** smiling face when they received their February 2016 issue. The child and adolescent psychiatrist and assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry graced the cover of the magazine, with a feature on the importance of being flexible when it comes to looking after patients. The interview focuses on Dr. Abidi's readiness to meet the patients and their families in multiple environments if necessary, decreasing the emphasis on traditional face-to-face care. Outside of meeting patients in her office or clinic, she often uses telehealth to connect with patients remotely, or meets them at home, at school, or in a coffee shop. She also



discusses her interest in collaborative mental healthcare and the importance in working with primary care providers

to increase the resources and level of communication and collaboration to enable them to provide care for youth with mild and moderate problems, thus freeing up space for tertiary care for those with more severe issues.

Dr. Abidi is also featured in the magazine's 'STATistics' section where she answers some more personal, candid questions.

Also featured in the magazine is a piece co-written by **Dr. Bianca Lauria-Horner**, associate professor in the department. Titled 'Fostering Mental Health,' it describes the results of a physician practice support program study. **Dr. Lara Hazelton** also contributed an article, on involving patients in medical education and the benefits to both the

patient and the students.

Last, but certainly not least, three of our residents, **Drs. Marie Claire Bourque, Alice Aylott and Mirka Kolajova**, co-wrote an article on resident wellness. The one-page piece describes the crucial role residents play in the healthcare

system and the increasingly common high levels of psychological distress they face related to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feeling low levels of personal achievement. Our psychiatry residents have spearheaded a Working Group on Resident Wellness

and have written a paper outlining evidence-based recommendations to ease the burden faced by residents.

We are proud that our department members are so well represented in the 38-page magazine. Congratulations to all who contributed!

DR. PENNY CORKUM PREPARES TO LAUNCH SLEEP STUDY

Dr. Penny Corkum and a national team of researchers including Dalhousie University's **Dr. Christine Chambers** are preparing to launch a randomized controlled trial assessing a new online sleep program in the spring. *Better Nights, Better Days* is an online program designed to offer accessible support to parents with children aged one to 10 years old who have sleep problems. Research shows up to 25 per cent of children suffer from insomnia, a problem that includes having trouble settling down at the end of the day, falling asleep, staying asleep, and waking too early.

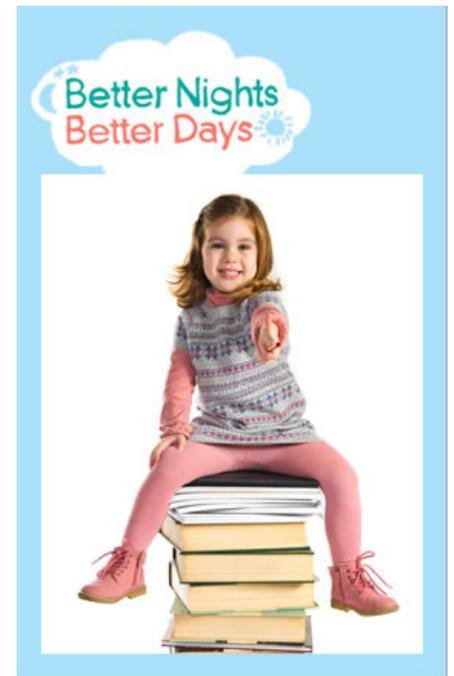
Very few children with insomnia receive behavioural treatments, despite the vast amount of evidence supporting their success. This is primarily due to a shortage of available treatment resources. The interactive and dynamic online program aims to help parents understand their child's sleep

problems and provide evidence-based strategies to help their child sleep better, all from the comfort of their own home.

Focusing on behavioural principles, the intervention encourages positive behaviours that will help children learn to settle down more quickly at bedtime and achieve a better quality of sleep throughout the night. Anyone who is a parent/guardian knows, when children sleep better they lead healthier and happier lives.

The study will be evaluating the effectiveness of both the delivery and usability of the online program. The researchers ultimately hope to provide a more accessible way of delivering sleep healthcare to families and healthcare professionals.

If you, or any parent/guardian you know might like to participate, please visit betternightsbetterdays.ca to self-



screen and submit your email to be contacted when the study opens. For updates you can follow on Twitter: [@Betternightsday](https://twitter.com/Betternightsday) or Facebook: facebook.com/betternightsdays.

FORMER RESIDENT MAKES DISCOVERY MAGAZINE'S LIST OF THE TOP 100 STORIES OF 2015

A resident who studied in the Department of Psychiatry from 2001-2006 has been featured in Discovery Magazine's list of the top 100 stories from 2015. Dr. Rob Tarzwell graduated from our program and went on to practice psychiatry and nuclear medicine at Lion's Gate

Hospital in North Vancouver. He has led a study that aims to accurately differentiate patients with PTSD from those with traumatic brain injury or no injury. He and his team of researchers used single-photon emission computed tomography, or SPECT, to correctly differentiate patients with

PTSD from those with a traumatic brain injury or no illness at all. To read more about Dr. Tarzwell's work please visit vancouver.sun.com and search "Lion's Gate doctor contributes to brain scan study named one of top 100 stories of 2015."

INTRODUCING THE ASSOCIATION FOR POSITIVE PSYCHIATRY OF CANADA

BY DR. E. ADRIANA WILSON, PSYCHIATRIST, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

Positive psychiatry focuses on the study of the non-medicinal aspects of wellness, including psychological, behavioural and social interventions that have been shown to promote physiological changes supporting the biology of resilience.

Some examples include the research demonstrating the benefits of gratitude journals on depression scores and cardiovascular risk factors, the benefits of weekly social connection on chronic pain and anxiety scores, and the brain changes that have been reported with Mindfulness, as well as its associated improvements in mental health and quality of life measures.

The Association for Positive Psychiatry of Canada was launched on Dec. 1, 2015 as a multidisciplinary and international collaboration.

It included a group of Dalhousie psychiatrists, psychologists, family medicine and some of the world's leaders in the areas of positive psychiatry (Dr. Dilip Jeste), positive psychology (Dr. Martin Seligman), and resilience research (Dr. Michael Ungar). It is the first association of its kind in the world, and marks the beginning of a new branch of

psychiatry.

Positive psychiatry shares positive psychology's focus on wellness, however it focuses on interventions associated with physiological changes supporting or promoting mental and physical health.

The aim of the association is to create a community of professionals interested in growing and distributing this information, in light of the mounting evidence that these types of interventions promote neuroplasticity and are one way we can empower our patients to assume a more active role in their own care. It is important for psychiatry to simultaneously develop excellent acute and emergency care interventions, as well as prevention and maintenance care practices that are informed by research.

Positive psychiatry is intended to compliment and enhance the existing model of psychiatry, and promote access to mental health services by distributing this information to front line workers who work with, or are the first point of contact for mental health patients, including psychiatrists, general practitioners, psychologists,



social workers, teachers, counselling therapists and pastoral care.

Promoting the dissemination of this information in understandable and usable formats, including newsletters, videos, webinars, conferences and workshops, will also help distribute the costs across multiple systems and promote interdisciplinary collaboration, improving care.

For more information about the association, its founding members, to join as a member (free) or to volunteer, visit www.appc.ca.

A special thank you to local founding members **Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy, Dr. Allan Abbass, Dr. E. Adriana Wilson, Dr. K. Ryan Wilson, Dr. Marie-Claire Bourque, Dr. Maria Patriquin & Dr. Michael Ungar.**

administrative news

Effective Feb. 1, 2015 there has been a change of responsibilities within the department administration.

Janet Bardon is relinquishing her research responsibilities and is now our newly created physician resource officer responsible for

physician recruitment, faculty appointments, promotion and tenure, the individual practice profile process, and performance management process. While these are not new responsibilities, due to increased demands we have revised her job to focus fully on these human resource

issues. Janet will continue to work closely with **Dr. Delva, Dr. Teehan,** and the human resource committee. She is located in room 8214 Abbie Lane Building and can be reached at Janet.Bardon@nshealth.ca.

Annette Cossar is adding the

research management role to her portfolio and is now our education and research administrator. Annette will continue to provide management of the education activities and will also be managing the research administration in the department. Jennifer Brown continues as our

research administrative assistant and will report to Annette. Should you have any research issues, please bring them forward to Annette who has moved offices to facilitate this new role. She is now located in room 8209 Abbie Lane Building and can be reached at

Annette.Cossar@nshealth.ca .

If you have any questions regarding the administrative activities of the department, please feel free to contact **Carolyn Sisley**, director of finance and administration at Carolyn.Sisley@nshealth.ca .

awards & honours

DR. ALLAN ABBASS MAKING MARK ON INTERNATIONAL PSYCHIATRY

Dr. Allan Abbass has been the recipient of two prestigious awards in recent months. He was named Visiting Professor of the Tavistock in London UK. The Tavistock is the leading psychotherapy research centre in the world where historical figures including Bowlby, Bion, Malan and others have worked. He will be charged with facilitating training and research in Intensive Short-term Dynamic Psychotherapy (ISTDP) for treatment refractory and psychosomatic patients populations treated in the National Health Services. This is his second UK Visiting professorship, the other being with University of Derby.

Dr. Abbass has helped develop similar services in the past two years in Italy, Norway, Australia, other parts of Canada and the U.S. based on his and his colleague's teaching and research of ISTDP. There is global interest in the method which is a form of 'deliberate practice' with detailed case study of each case, video review and outcome study to improve care.

In early February Dr. Abbass was



Dr. Allan Abbass (right) is awarded a Visiting Professorship at University of Derby.

also named the 2016 Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA's Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences. With this honour, given to thought leaders and those psychiatrists impacting global psychiatry, he will visit UCLA this fall and provide workshops to faculty and residents.

These recognitions have come alongside a long line of training requests and university invitations.

This year alone he has been invited to present at Harvard University, University of Kentucky, Memorial University, University of Zurich, University of Lund (Sweden), University of Kaunas (in Lithuania), University of Manitoba, University of Toronto and University of Southern California. He provides training to local trainers and facilitates clinical-research projects now in several regions in North America, Europe and Australia.

Photo Feature

BY DR. SHABBIR AMANULLAH, PSYCHIATRIST AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



Bubbles!

HEADLINES SUBMISSIONS

Headlines aims to provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and items of general interest to the faculty, fellows, students and staff of the Department of Psychiatry. Your contribution(s) are needed and greatly appreciated.

The next issue of **Headlines** will be distributed on May 2, 2016, with the deadline for submissions to be April 15, 2016.

Please send all submissions to Kate Rogers:
Kate.Rogers@nshealth.ca

UPCOMING AWARD DEADLINES

There are many awards that Department of Psychiatry faculty, fellows, residents, and staff are eligible to win each year. The following is a list of awards with upcoming deadlines. If you would like to nominate someone please contact **Kate Rogers** at Kate.Rogers@nshealth.ca. The awards committee will work with you to organize nomination materials. For further details and terms of reference for the awards please visit our website (<http://www.medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/about/awards.html>).

Granting Body: **Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association**

- Alumnus/a of the Year (April 1)
- Young Alumnus/a of the Year (April 1)

Granting Body: **Association of Academic Psychiatry**

- AAP Educator Award (April 1)
- AAP Roberts Award (April 1)
- AAP Fellowship Award (April 1)
- AAP Junior Faculty Award (April 1)

Granting Body: **Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada**

- Program Director of the Year (April 1)

Granting Body: **Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry**

- Annual Award for Outstanding Contributions to Geriatric Psychiatry (April 29)

Granting Body: **Medical Council of Canada**

- Dr. Louis Levasseur Distinguished Service Award (May 1)
- Outstanding Achievement Award in the Evaluation of Clinical Competence (May 1)

Granting Body: **The Association of Chairs of Psychiatry in Canada**

- ACPC Award for Excellence in Education (May 1)
- ACPC Annual Research Award (May 1)
- ACPC Annual Award for Creative Professional Activity

If you have any questions please contact Ms. Kate Rogers at Kate.Rogers@nshealth.ca or by phone at 902-473-1677.