

HEADLINES

November 2020 / VOLUME 15/ ISSUE 6



MILESTONE REACHED IN NSEPP

NOVA SCOTIA EARLY PSYCHOSIS
PROGRAM CELEBRATES 25 YEARS



IN THIS ISSUE

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On the cover: The Nova Scotia Early Psychosis Program team in fall 2019.

This newsletter is published for the Department of Psychiatry at Dalhousie University.

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HEAD LINES

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM HEAD



This issue of *Headlines* goes into depth about a number of exciting honours and anniversaries that occurred this fall.

Our feature article is on the Nova Scotia Early Psychosis program which turned 30 this year. This fascinating piece interviews people involved in the creation of the team back when it was pioneering an innovative new care model right up to the current day when early intervention is now a standard of care. Congratulations to NSEPP and all the team has accomplished over 30 years!

We also get a more detailed information about our multiple award winners from this fall. **Dr. Martin Alda** was awarded the Colvin Prize by the Brain & Behaviour Foundation. This prestigious award recognizes career achievement in Bipolar Disorder research. This piece highlights some of Dr. Alda's many career achievements and lists the link where you can stream his talk connected with receiving this award. Congratulations Martin on your outstanding career thus far and this richly deserved award.

This fall **Dr. Selene Etches** won the Paul Steinhauer Advocacy Award from the CACAP for her tireless work with adolescents with substance use disorders. **Dr. Ali Manning** was awarded the MARDOC Kitt Turney Award for resident wellness. At the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Society residents **Drs. Marissa LeBlanc** and **Crystal Zhou** both won national awards. Congratulations to everyone – you make the department proud.



Dr. Jason Morrison

Several faculty members have had their excellent work recognized through invitation to participate in national initiatives in mental health. Please read the pieces highlighting the work of **Dr. Rami Rudnick** and **Drs. Mutiat Sulyman** and **Olugbenga Williams'** ANSU team.

In education news you can read about the career and education interests of our new Associate Program Director, **Dr. Deborah Parker**. The Med Ed Minute focuses on upping your Zoom skills by describing how to incorporate break out rooms into your meetings.

As we head towards 2021, one thing on my mind is how we might come together and celebrate our efforts collectively. I've had to cancel our booking for our annual holiday party given provincial restrictions on the

size of gatherings. I think it would be wonderful if we could find a COVID-compatible way to gather and celebrate. If anyone has creative ideas of how we might do this please share them with me.

On a personal note I want to thank all department members for their commitment through this difficult year to departmental cooperation and flexibility as we continue to work around the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This fall we were able to reorganize our work collectively to offer greater capacity in our acute care services where COVID pressures continue. I'm feeling confident that we will continue to respond adaptively as the situation evolves during 2021.

ON THE COVER



It's been 25 years since the Nova Scotia Early Psychosis Program (NSEPP) saw its first patients; 25 years since they began to change the lives of young people suffering in the early stages of mental illness. The program has grown immensely since the doors opened, adding physicians and other healthcare providers, support workers, and even moving into a larger space more conducive to the needs of the patients. Their dedication to their patient population is evident through their reputation as one of the leaders in early intervention in psychosis in the country.

Twenty-five years ago **David Whitehorn** was working as clinical nurse specialist at the Nova Scotia Hospital. He recalls walking through the halls in the old nurse's residence and noticing a flyer posted looking for a nurse with experience in research to start a new program. That program would eventually become the NSEPP, one of the first clinics of its kind in Canada; a program recognizing the importance of early identification and specialized care in optimizing outcomes for youth and young adults presenting with psychotic symptoms. The name of the contact person on the flyer was Dr. Lili Kopala, and after a long and fascinating conversation with her about what she was proposing, David jumped on board.

Recruited by then department head, **Dr. Stan Kutcher**, Dr. Kopala came to Nova Scotia from British Columbia with the intent to create a specialized program for the early



The Key Findings in Early Psychosis workshop in Wolfville in 2017. (L-R) Dr. Sabina Abidi (director, Youth Psychosis Team IWK and EPINS), Dr. Phil Tibbo (EPINS director), Glen Berry (EPINS coordinator, Western Zone), Dana Pulsifer (director of Mental Health and Addictions, Western Zone), Donna Methot (family representative, EPINS steering group), David Whitehorn (EPINS evaluation coordinator).

stages of psychotic disorder. As she worked to initiate the program, others in Victoria, Calgary, London, and Toronto were developing almost simultaneously. Those five programs were the first early psychosis programs in the country, and Canada was one of the earliest adopters of the early psychosis idea.

The program was designed to have four components: clinical,

research, education and advocacy. The components were seen as being integrated and supportive of one another. The clinical component would focus on people who were in the very early stages of a psychotic disorder. For David, this was a surprising and novel idea. "After I had completed my master's I did a lot of work with patients who were suffering from chronic schizophrenia or other kinds of mental illness," he says. "I

had never really thought about what happened right at the beginning of a psychotic disorder and the idea of developing a clinical service that was specialized for that population I had not heard about before.”

As it turned out, that idea had been developing in a number of places in the world for the previous five years. The model program was in Melbourne, Australia and the premise was that if you identified and treated these psychotic disorders at the earliest possible stage you would have much better outcomes. In the 1990s there were some very negative views of the outcomes of psychotic disorders. It was not unusual for young people who developed psychosis to hear they would suffer from the illness for the entirety of their lives, and that they should lower their expectations for what they hoped to accomplish in life. Those that were proponents of this new early intervention were hoping to change this pessimistic view to a more realistic optimism. The attitudes of the clinicians, as well as the patients and their families would be very important.

The research component of the early psychosis program that Dr. Kopala envisioned involved both clinical trials working with the pharmaceutical industry, and clinical research following patients. The clinical trials allowed the team to answer some important, yet basic, questions such as: what dose of anti-psychotic medication do you use for someone who is first presenting with a psychotic disorder? Not surprisingly, a lower dose is required for someone in the early stages of psychosis. “I think those of us who has been prescribing psychotics for years and years were surprised at how low the dose needed

to be to be effective and relatively safe,” recalls David. “I think it was exciting to get that issue clarified and documented because, in retrospect, we could see young people who came in who were getting doses that were way too high and having very bad side effects as a result. The high doses just weren’t necessary.” The trials also gave them the opportunity to test the new medications for dosage and effectiveness that were becoming available in the early psychosis population.

Another part of the research was following the progress of the patients. From the early days, this was a very significant piece of the program. They used standardized rating scales on all patients and as result, were able to develop a database over the first couple of years, which they continue to build, that allowed them to track how patients changed with treatment. Because other early psychosis programs were doing the same thing publications began to come out showing that first episode psychosis was highly treatable with the antipsychotic medication and with the support of a psychosocial environment. “Literally 85-90 per cent of the people that came through our program were dramatically better, even after six months, and certainly after a year,” says David. This was a very important early finding that the program contributed to. The realistic optimism that was the basis of the early psychosis movement was shown to be absolutely true. “We were able to say honestly to people, ‘it’s very, very likely you are going to get way, way, way better and because of that you are going to be able to pursue and accomplish things you want to do in

your life in a way that is really quite reasonable.”

The program also conducted studies on cognitive issues in early psychosis. Led by **Kim Good**, a psychologist who had come to Nova Scotia with Dr. Kopala, this work explored the inability in some early psychosis patients to recognize and name common odors.

Dr. Kopala wanted to ensure patient and family education was emphasized in the program. She felt it was important to provide families with enough information about the disorder and the treatment so that they could be more competent partners in their care, particularly where the population was quite young. Families were more often than not the essential caregivers and had tremendous influence on treatment outcome. As a result, the team focused on developing family education resources. Dr. Kopala also offered workshops for health professionals throughout Nova Scotia teaching them about the basic idea of early intervention in psychosis, the proper dosing of medication for this population, and patient-family education. This was the first indication that the program was provincial in scope. Besides taking referrals from across the province, they worked to develop capacity in the clinicians throughout Nova Scotia to work with this population.

Education naturally supported advocacy by making the issues and needs in early psychosis accessible to clinicians, administrators, politicians and the community. The program also supported advocacy by parents who talked with government, as well as participation in the creation of

innovative community programs such as Laing House.

During the first five years the international interest and activity in early psychosis was developing. The International Early Psychosis Association (IEPA) was formed and the first international conference was held in Tasmania in 1998. Dr. Kopala attended as one of the major leaders in early psychosis. By 2000 the conference was held in New York City and the majority of the NSEPP staff attended, allowing them to meet a lot of the people they had been reading about, or exchanging emails with. “There was such a sense of comradery and a tremendous amount of support for these programs who were all finding really excellent outcomes,” recalls David.

Through significant international contact Dr. Kopala became acquainted with Dr. Paul Janssen. He was a physician from Belgium who started his own company making medications after the pharmaceutical industry was decimated after the Second World War. The company developed into what we know today as Janssen Pharmaceutical. Dr. Janssen, a brilliant scholar, was personally involved in developing a wide range of medications, including Risperidone, which was one of the medications the NSEPP was involved in testing in the clinical trials. Dr. Janssen became very interested in the idea of early intervention in psychosis as a result of his conversations with Dr. Kopala. Through his research foundation he made a significant donation to Dalhousie to set up an endowed research chair. The chair also received a tremendous amount of financial support from the Mental Health



Dr. Phil Tibbo speaks during the Dr. Paul Janssen Chair reception in 2008.

Foundation of Nova Scotia. **Dr. Phil Tibbo**, a psychiatrist who at the time was working in Alberta, was named the first Dr. Paul Janssen Chair in Psychotic Disorders in 2008, a position he holds to this day.

“Having Phil Tibbo come to the program was huge,” says David. “I was on the search committee and we went through a lot of people who were very high-powered people in the field. We were impressed with the ability that Phil had for actually helping people work together and reaching out into the community. We had a good start, but he really took it to a whole new level.”

Around the time that Dr. Tibbo arrived, the program moved locations. When it began it occupied an empty floor at the Purdy Building at the Nova Scotia Hospital. In 2008 it moved to the third floor of the Abbie J. Lane, a space they still occupy, allowing for more

opportunity for collaboration among the team and space to grow.

Much has happened with the NSEPP over the last 25 years. Perhaps most notably, the program was recognized as a specialty team in 2004, along with eating disorders and seniors mental health. This same year the provincial standards of care for early psychosis were developed, establishing the program as a more formal service. One of the standards involved the development of a provincial network, with representation from all areas of the province. The network has evolved over time and with recent direction from senior leadership, the network was reformed into a provincial model of care, Early Psychosis Intervention Nova Scotia (EPINS). Early psychosis prevention services are now organized in each health zone, with nodes of care identified in each zone. A provincial steering committee guides the capacity development of its

clinicians, service organization, and activities of EPINS. This steering committee importantly includes an individual with lived experience and a family member, in addition to the zonal facilitators and a provincial coordinator.

One thing that makes the NSEPP especially unique is that it services both the adult and child and adolescent populations. In 2007, **Dr. Sabina Abidi**, who was completing her fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry, subspecializing in early psychosis, worked with **Dr. Heather Milliken** to develop the child and adolescent arm of the program at the IWK Health Centre. Because the age of onset for early psychosis often straddles both child and adult services, it was important the program adapt to meet those needs. Today, things run seamlessly between Nova Scotia Health and the IWK, despite the administration hurdle of two locations and hospital operations. As best as possible, all education, research, and clinical services are shared and patients transition from child and adolescent to adult mental health services with confidence and comfort that they will continue to receive specialized care for their illness.

Education in the program has remained strong from day one. Margie Crown, the program's education coordinator, has been with the team since the late 1990s. "Education has been such a strong pillar for us," says Dr. Tibbo. "In order for early intervention to work, we also have to provide education to all of our community stakeholders. So Margie's work to reach out to student health centres, GPs, and other allied

professionals, has been really crucial." The NSEPP also offered a mentorship program, introducing the idea of early psychosis and this new and exciting field to people who really had no other access to the education development.

The NSEPP is now a recognized program in the country and beyond. They often play host to other groups from across the country who wish to come and train with them. They spend two or three days with the team to learn how they operate. As the education coordinator, Margie regularly gets calls from individuals and groups asking about the family education program and how the team has managed to maintain it as such a strong component. Early psychosis is seen as the standard for prioritizing family education.

Recently the program added a peer support worker, further bolstering their compliment of staff. This addition resulted from a research project focused on optimizing transitions out of the program. Findings showed that patients wanted to have peer support from someone who they could relate to. In 2019 an individual was hired who had been through the early psychosis program themselves, and has proven to be an excellent addition to the team.

Though the program has seen many changes over the years, one thing has remained the same and that is its focus on innovative, evidence-based programming and care. Perhaps that focus is more easily maintained as a result of the longevity of team members. Dr. Abidi, who has been involved since 2006, remarks that it is roughly the same group of people today. "These are key people who

share a curiosity and passion for this work. We all share a common goal of working towards achieving better outcomes for youth and young adults with this illness," she says. "This shared passion keeps us connected and faithful to each other and our patients." Dr. Tibbo shares that sentiment and says everyone truly has a passion towards this work. "Everyone is really focused on optimizing outcomes and trying to figure out how we go about doing that. Working in early intervention services we see that there is really a lot that we can do to improve long term outcomes. Working in a recovery-oriented environment, where there is that hope and optimism, is very rewarding."

The NSEPP had hoped to celebrate their 25th anniversary with an event at the Discovery Centre in the fall. Unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic prevented this celebration from coming to fruition. Instead, the milestone was recognized with a special virtual grand rounds presentation by Dr. Ashok Malla, who was a tremendous support when the program was being developed, and continues to be. Congratulations to the Early Psychosis Program on 25 years of excellence.

For more information on the NSEPP and the work they do please visit earlypsychosis.medicine.dal.ca.

RESEARCH REPORT



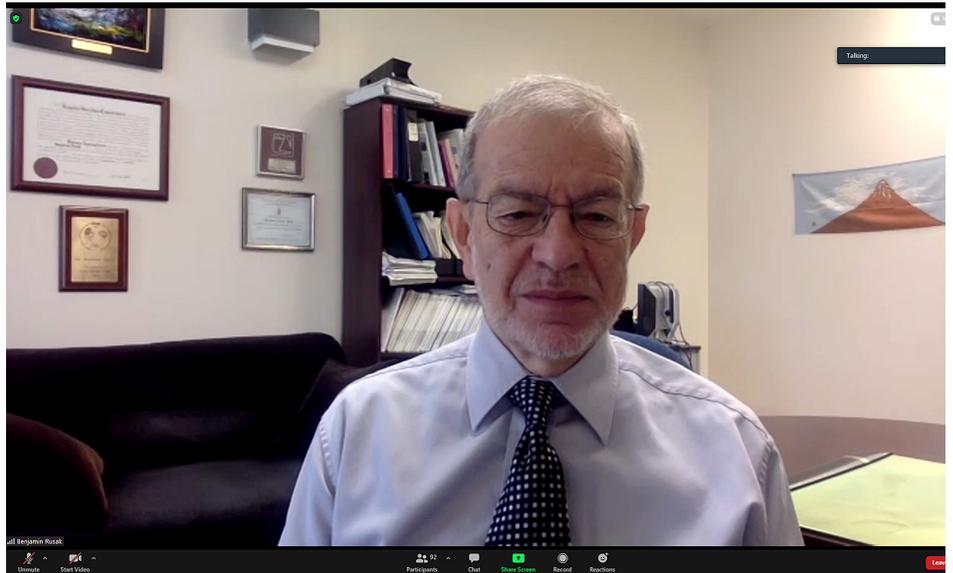
Research Day 2020

The 30th Annual Research Day was held October 30 over Zoom. Dr. Kathleen Brady, president of the International Society of Addiction Medicine Executive Committee and vice president for research at the Medical University of South Carolina, opened the event with the keynote talk, *The relationship between stress and substance use disorders: A complex conundrum*. This was followed by eight faculty, staff, and student oral presentations and 28 poster presentations in the afternoon.

Café Scientifique

The Café Scientifique, titled *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on addictive behaviors and addictions services* was held over Zoom the evening of October 29. **Dr. Sherry Stewart** moderated the event and speakers included:

- Dr. Kathleen Brady, MD, PhD, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, VP research, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC
- **Dr. Simon Sherry**, PhD, professor of psychology & neuroscience and psychiatry, Dalhousie University, private practice psychologist, CRUX Psychology
- **Dr. Igor Yakovenko**, PhD, assistant professor of psychology & neuroscience and psychiatry, Dalhousie University, private practice psychologist, Jacqueline Milner-Clerk & Associates



Dr. Ben Rusak, director of research, speaks during virtual Research Day on October 30.

- **Dr. Selene Etches**, MD, child & adolescent psychiatrist, medical director of the IWK Concurrent Disorders Program, assistant professor of psychiatry, Dalhousie University

Department Funding April 2020 DPRF Competition Recipients

- **Dr. Tomas Hajek** – *Neuroprotective effects of Li on retinal ganglion cells*
- **Dr. Sherry Stewart** – *Neural mechanisms underlying relief and reward craving in concurrent PTSD - cannabis use disorder: A cue exposure plus fMRI pilot study*

EDUCATION REPORT



UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

Skilled Clinician

Our Med 2 Skilled Clinician block is winding down in mid-November, and we continue to be impressed with the dedication, flexibility, and aplomb with which our faculty and residents have transitioned to delivering this experience entirely online. A number of our residents volunteered to act as standardized patients this year, ensuring that students would not miss out on valuable interviewing experiences in the event that a patient volunteer could no longer attend.

We would like to extend a special thanks to them, and to all of our faculty, residents and patients who participated.

Psychiatry Interest Group

We would like to welcome the new Psychiatry Interest Group chair Katharine Birkness. We would also like to thank Matthew Cooper and Benjamin MacDonald for their service as co-chairs of the Psychiatry Interest Group in 2019/2020. The interest group is a valuable link between the department and the medical students; increasing awareness and facilitating discussion.

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

CaRMS 2021

The education team is still in the planning stages of next year's virtual CaRMS. CaRMS interviews for all candidates, including local applicants, will be taking place over three weeks in March 2021.

CBME update

The first cohort of PGY-1s all successfully completed their Transition to Discipline stage and have moved on to Foundations of Discipline (FOD). FOD will see them through PGY-1 to the end of PGY-2. A reminder

that faculty and senior residents working with PGY-1 residents, both on service and on call, should be regularly completing EPA forms in One45. The required EPAs for Foundations of Discipline include:

EPA#	Details
1	Assessing, diagnosing and participating in the management of patients with medical presentations relevant to psychiatry
2	Performing psychiatric assessments referencing a biopsychosocial approach, and developing basic differential diagnoses for patients with mental disorders
3	Developing and implementing management plans for patients with psychiatric presentations of low to medium complexity
4	Performing risk assessments that inform the development of an acute safety plan for patients posing risk for harm to self or others
5	Performing critical appraisal and presenting psychiatric literature

FELLOWSHIP AND SUBSPECIALTY TRAINING NEWS

Program updates

This fall has been quite busy for the Geriatric Psychiatry Residency Program. Though we do not have a PGY-6 resident, we have the pleasure of working with **Dr. Christelle Boudreau** during her PGY-5 year, as she prepares to enter the program on July 1, 2021.

We interviewed four applicants for the 2022 residency position. **Dr. Kathleen Singh**, the chair of the Geriatric Psychiatry Selection Committee, held the first meeting of the committee on October 2.

CBD workshop

Geriatric psychiatry faculty attended a CBD workshop on September 24, presented by **Drs. Mark Bosma** and **Cheryl Murphy**, with a focus on the Observation of Achievement scale. The program is piloting two EPA's (entrustable professional activity) this year in preparation for the CBD curriculum launch on July 1, 2021. **Dr. Terry Chisholm** completed a lot of the work before going on sabbatical, so we are pleased to say the CBD launch is on schedule.

GRADUATE STUDIES IN PSYCHIATRY RESEARCH NEWS

MSc Psychiatry Research

Our second cohort of master's students in the Psychiatry Research Program graduated Oct. 16, 2020 after virtual thesis defenses. Congratulations to **Maya Biderman, Lezlee Mckenzie, Athena Milios, Jocelyn Paul, Alex Pizzo, and Andrea Sandstrom.**

Maya Biderman

Thesis title: *Researchers' Perspectives on Barriers and Facilitators to Conducting Genetic Research Involving Biospecimen Collection with Indigenous Populations in Canada and the United States*

Supervisor: **Dr. Amy Bombay**

Lezlee Mckenzie

Thesis Title: *Psychosis and Cannabis: An Investigation of Individual and*

Combined Effects on Cognition and White Matter

Supervisor: **Dr. Phil Tibbo**

Athena Milios

Thesis Title: *Exploring the Experiences of Health Workers Recruiting for Clinical Trials in Mental Health*

Supervisor: **Dr. Patrick McGrath**

Jocelyn Paul

Thesis Title: *Social Stressors, Community Belonging, and Culture-Related Protective Factors Among Youth and Adults in First Nations Communities: Links with Psychological Distress*

Supervisor: **Dr. Amy Bombay**

Alex Pizzo

Thesis Title: *The Effect of Parental*

Internalizing Symptoms and Overprotection on Child Sleep Problems

Supervisor: **Dr. Barbara Pavlova**

Andrea Sandstrom

Thesis Title: *Behavioural Inhibition as a Risk Factor for Mood and Anxiety Disorders*

Supervisor: **Dr. Barbara Pavlova**

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Save the date

December 16: *You should read this! The best articles of 2020*

The final clinical academic rounds of 2020 will be hosted by **Drs. Lara Hazelton, Jason Morrison and Amy Gough** (PGY4). It is scheduled to be the ever-popular, *You should read this! The best articles of 2020*.

Call for Articles

Have you read an article in 2020 that has changed your practice? Maybe you find yourself thinking, everyone should read this! Well, this is your chance to share that article with your colleagues and learners. Send us the reference along with a couple of sentences about why it is important or interesting. Articles do not have to be written in 2020, and websites and non-academic articles are welcome. Everyone who submits a suggestion will have their name entered into a draw for a fabulous prize!

To recommend an article, please email Lara.Hazelton@nshealth.ca, by Dec. 4, 2020.

W.O. McCormick Academic Day

The W.O. McCormick Academic Day (WOMAD) conference is scheduled on Friday, May 7, 2021. The planning committee is in the process of determining if the conference will be online or in-person. Watch our webpage for details and registration: <https://dalpsychiatry.ca/s/womad>

Upcoming Med Ed Credit Opportunities

A reminder to faculty about upcoming sessions that meet the DoP criteria for professional development in medical education. A completed evaluation of the event is the record of attendance. Look for the MedEd tag in the event details.

May 19, 2021: Dr. Chris Watling

EDUCATION KUDOS CORNER

A big thank you goes out to our residents who went above and beyond to help the undergrad curriculum smoothly transition to Zoom/online teaching. They offered to act as simulated patients, learned scenarios and offered their time when it was not mandatory. Special thank you to **Drs. Emily Fraser, Lauren Chan, Tyson Rizzardo, Laura Downing and Amy Gough**.

MED-ED MINUTE

The “Med Ed Minute” introduces scholarly snippets to consider in your teaching practice.

Tips for using Zoom breakout rooms

This Med Ed Minute highlights the increasingly popular Zoom feature, breakout rooms. Stay tuned for more tips on using other Zoom features in upcoming issues of Med Ed Minute.

What are Zoom breakout rooms?

Breakout rooms allow the Host/ Co-Host(s) to divide their class into separate “rooms” to enable smaller group discussion or collaboration. These rooms are separate from the main Zoom space. Each room has its own audio/video not connected to any other room. If you traditionally use small group teaching in the classroom, breakout rooms are your solution for the virtual classroom.

How to use Zoom breakout rooms?

Create your breakout rooms

1. Start your scheduled teaching session in Zoom
2. Click the Breakout Rooms icon
3. Select the number of rooms you want to create
4. Select an option for assigning learners to breakout rooms:
 - a. Automatically assign
 - b. Manually assign
5. Click Create Rooms

If you chose option A: Automatically assign learners to rooms

1. Click Open All Rooms

If you chose option B: Manually assign learners to rooms

1. Click Assign
2. Click the learners’ names to add to that room
3. Repeat steps 1 & 2 for each room
4. Click Open All Rooms

Learners will receive a pop-up message to join the room. Once they click Join, they are moved to their assigned room.

Managing breakout rooms

To bring everyone back to the main space, click Close All Rooms. “All breakout rooms will close in 60 seconds” is broadcast to all rooms. After 60 seconds, all learners are back in the main zoom space.

To use the breakout rooms again in the same session, click Open All Rooms.

Tips

- When participants are in breakout rooms, they can all share screens.
- Host/Co-Host can broadcast messages to all rooms (“5 mins left!”) by clicking Broadcast a message to all.
- Host/Co-Host can join any room by clicking Join beside the room you’d like to join.

Interested in more detailed instructions?

Visit the Zoom support page for a helpful 3 minute video on using breakout rooms <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313>.

Suggestions for future Med Ed Minute topics

If you have suggestions for what you would like to see in a future Med Ed Minute, please send them to **Mandy Eslinger**.

References

Zoom Video Communications. (n.d.). Managing Breakout Rooms. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313>.

MEET AN EDUCATOR: DR. DEBORAH PARKER

Meet an Educator is a recurring article in the Education Report of *Headlines*. In this issue we profile **Dr. Deborah Parker**, assistant professor, associate program director of postgraduate education, and psychiatrist in the Department of Psychiatry. If you are interested in being profiled in an upcoming publication, please contact Kate Rogers at Kate.Rogers@nshealth.ca.

My current education/teaching

interests: A workshop I once attended suggested that we should try to find work that maximizes the things that give us energy. For me, that has always included teaching; be it bedside teaching, psychotherapy supervision (I love supervising group psychotherapy!) or lectures. Most of my lectures are to junior residents where I tend to teach on areas related to the development, assessment and treatment of personality disorders (particularly borderline personality disorder).

I am also really excited to be stepping into the role of associate postgraduate director for the psychiatry residency program. I look forward to collaborating more closely with residents, and other members of the education team in the continued development of a strong training program.

My preferred method of teaching

or curriculum delivery: I enjoy most of it, however if I had to pick one, I would probably say that I prefer direct supervision, either on service or in psychotherapy. I think it is important for all of us to continue to grow and adapt in our practices. While I do endeavour to always give learners at least one specific point for improvement, I have equally found that in working directly with residents, they have challenged me to do the same.



Dr. Deborah Parker

A typical “Day in My Work Life”: If only I knew! I have been in a state of transition since the summer, taking on the associate PG position and changing my clinical practice. I started in psychiatric emergency at the beginning of October, leaving Bayers Road community mental health after nine years. The change is exciting, but I have yet to develop a rhythm. Some constants are Wednesday afternoons when I meet with my dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT) team for consultation and skills development at the bipolar disorders treatment program, and Wednesday evening where I supervise the resident-led process group.

The most satisfying and frustrating aspects of doing academic work:

Teaching and education generally are the most satisfying. I feel very fortunate that I have been supported by the department to teach as much as I do as part of my academic work.

I'm not sure what the most frustrating would be. Probably not having enough hours in the day to provide the quality of supervision that I would like to because of competing demands (clinical and administrative) on my time.

My education/academic mentor: Dr. Margaret Rajda has been a mentor of mine since I was a senior resident. I have felt most comfortable being vulnerable with her about my doubts and fears, and she has been the most influential in helping me to sort out my career path and goals.

My second career choice: It depends on the day. I sometimes fantasize about working in an area of health and fitness such as being a personal trainer, or doing something more creative like interior design. On my more serious days, I think about working in business the way both of my parents did. None of these are likely considerations as I really can't imagine being anything other than a psychiatrist. I am what I am!

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Faculty Development Opportunities

Dalhousie Continuing Professional Development

Online Learning

Online Courses:

SAVE THE DATE:

Emerging Leaders in Academic Medicine (April – June 2021)
Details TBD

Teaching and Assessing Critical Thinking 2 (January-April 2021) Details TBD

Webinars

Nov. 12, 20:00-21:00: “Seeing” the Patient: Visual art, portraiture and the experience of illness with Dr. Wendy Stewart | <https://dal.adobeconnect.com/cme-live>

Nov. 26, 20:00-21:00: *Using feedback and coaching to support learner wellness* with Dr. Joan Sargeant | <https://dal.adobeconnect.com/cme-live>

Dec.10, 20:00-21:00: *Facing Conflict from the Inside Out: Listening, the Cornerstone to Transformative Justice* with Maureen St. Clair | <https://dal.adobeconnect.com/cme-live>

Resources for Virtual Supervision of Learners

Virtual Supervision of Medical Students in Clinical Settings (https://dal.adobeconnect.com/_a840580711/pg7cddqgc22e/?proto=true)

Tutor Skill Development Program – small group facilitation online. Contact FacDev@Dal.ca for access to this online module in Brightspace

Faculty Development has additional resources that can be found at <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/cpd/about/COVID19PhysicianInformation/TeachingResources.html>.

2018-2020 recorded webinars

Over the past year FacDev hosted a variety of different webinars including six related to teaching during COVID.

Webinar recordings are available upon request by contacting FacDev@dal.ca

Online Modules

FacDev offers a wide variety of online modules which you are able to access from the comfort of your own home – only internet access is required!

Some of the modules include:

- Reflective Thinking and Its Use in Medicine (accredited)
- Tutor Skill Development – updated with info re teaching online
- Medical Records Keeping (accredited)
- Documenting Your Teaching

For more information, and to access the modules please contact FacDev@dal.ca

For more information on Faculty Development and their programs, email them at FacDev@dal.ca.

Note: Many Faculty Development activities are accredited. If you would like to receive a CME listing of your credits for the past year, or other date span, please feel free to contact Deirdre Harvey at 902-494-2234 or deirdre.harvey@dal.ca.

CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY REPORT



Awards

On behalf of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, we would like to commend **Dr. Selene Etches** on her receipt of the 2020 Dr. Paul D. Steinhauer Award from the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Read more about this on page 21.

Successful COVID grant funding

Dr. Leslie Anne Campbell, Maureen Brennan, Dr. Sharon Clark, Dr. Debbie Emberly, and **Dr. Jill Chorney** have recently received a COVID-19 Mental Health & Substance Use Service Needs and Delivery grant from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) for \$194,211 for the project *Our Virtual Reality: Rapidly Responding to Changing Mental Health Needs among Children and Adolescents*. The application was submitted in conjunction with **Drs. Normand Carrey** and **Sandra Meier**. This study proposes to describe the mental health care needs of children, adolescents, and families in Nova Scotia during the COVID-19 pandemic and evaluate the barriers and facilitators of the delivery of virtual mental health care, including the views of children, adolescents, families, and service providers.

CACAP

Drs. Alexa Bagnell, Susan Baer, Marjorie Robb, **Sabina Abidi**, Clare Roscoe and Trudy Adam presented an Academic Perspective entitled *COVID-19 Pandemic and Psychiatric Care: Cross Country Review of System Responses, Experiences and Outcomes*

at the 40th Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Virtual Conference. This webinar was available to session attendees from September 2 through to September 19.

Congratulations subspecialty residents

On behalf of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, we would like to congratulate **Dr. Ali Manning** and **Dr. Katie Radchuck** on passing their Royal College exams. Drs. Manning and Radchuck faced the obstacle of writing their exams during the COVID-19 pandemic; this accomplishment is a true testament to their dedication, commitment, and perseverance. Congratulations on your very well-deserved success!

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Competency-Based Medical Education workshop

The Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) hosted its first of four Competency Based Medical Education (CBME) Workshops on Friday, Oct. 2, 2020. This session provided a broad overview of CBME and the planned launch of CBME in CAP. This workshop was well very attended with 16 faculty members from across the province in attendance.

If you are interested in watching a recording of this session, please contact **Megan Bellefontaine** at Megan.Bellefontaine@iwk.nshealth.ca.

DR. PAUL JANSSEN CHAIR IN PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS REPORT

Return to research

Over the summer we have seen a slow return to active research, following the direction of NSH and Dalhousie with respect to research during the COVID-19 pandemic. The break in research, however, will have effects. Especially, for example, in our longitudinal cannabis and MRI study where repeated assessments over a one year period are critical. That said, we are back up and running with our research studies and hopefully this will continue as we move into late fall and winter.

Master's student

We congratulate **Lezlee McKenzie** who successfully defended her MSc over the summer. Lezlee had been supervised by the Chair during her studies. Her thesis involved the investigation of the effects of cannabis on cognition and brain white matter in early phase psychosis and presented this work in an oral talk at the October Department of Psychiatry Research Day.

Grant funding

There were three recent grants awarded. The Janssen Chair is the PI on a grant from the Canadian Center on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) that will allow a collaboration between the psychiatry, psychology and the emergency departments, investigating cannabis related presentations to the emergency department. Additionally, the Chair is a co-investigator on a recently

announced grant from the Gambling Association of NS (**Dr. Derek Fisher** as PI), examining the link between disordered gambling, psychosis and cognition.

Another recent grant awarded was an investigator initiated study funded by Janssen Inc, investigating the use of long-acting injectable antipsychotics during the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to a similar time period just prior to COVID-19. Similarly, **Dr. Nadine Nejati** (PGY2) has been investigating the effects of COVID-19 on our admissions to acute care and presented this data at the department's Research Day in October.

CPA presentation

The Janssen Chair was the lead author on the Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) position statement on the potential therapeutic uses of cannabinoid products in adult mental health, which was recently released. He will be speaking to this position statement and the work that went into its development as a plenary lecture at the Canadian Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting October 24.

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Dr. Abraham Rudnick appointed to new research positions

Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick, who is the humanities coordinator in the Department of Psychiatry and the Clinical Director of the Nova Scotia Operational Stress Injury Clinic, was formally appointed in late September as the co-chair of Research Canada's new Task Force on Racial and Indigenous Justice in Health Research and Related Innovation. Dr. Rudnick is a member of the Board of Directors of Research Canada, which is a not for profit organization that advocates for health research and health innovation in Canada across sectors, including a collaboration with the Health Research Caucus of the Federal parliament. Dr. Rudnick's co-chair is expected to be appointed soon.

The task force will collect data in Canada to support policy analysis and recommendations to the Board of Directors of Research Canada for advocacy in relation to addressing injustice and discrimination related to indigenous people and other minorities in health research and related innovation. This will include such things as sufficient representation of researchers, research administrators and research participants. The work of the task force will involve collaboration with external partners who have related lived experience and relevant expertise.

Dr. Rudnick has also been appointed to the Research Reference Group to inform the work of the Centre of Excellence on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Related Mental Health Conditions. Based in Ottawa, the Centre of Excellence on PTSD and Related Mental Health Conditions (the Centre) builds strong community networks to create the best possible supports and services for Veterans, first responders, and their families. The Centre is comprised of an advisory committee, community-based reference groups, and communities of practice where lived experience is valued as much as technical expertise.

The Reference Group will be made up of a group of researchers in their early or mid-careers, as well as subject-matter experts in veteran mental health. As part of this team Dr. Rudnick will provide strategic advice and expertise on different initiatives, and he will also serve as an ambassador for the Centre at certain events. His term as a member of this group will run approximately three years.



Dr. Abraham Rudnick

Former Emerald Hall to participate in Mental Health Commission initiative

The Adult Neurodevelopmental Stabilization Unit (ANSU), formerly Emerald Hall, has been selected to participate in a new initiative offered by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). The goal of this initiative is to support identifying, describing, and highlighting real-world examples of approaches that address mental illness and substance use-related structural stigma in Canada's healthcare system.

"This is such exciting news as it

means other dual diagnoses services and patients will benefit from what the ANSU inpatient unit and COAST, the outreach team, have achieved in transforming their model of care," says Rachel Boehm, director of the Mental Health Program at Nova Scotia Health. "With their new approaches, they are making a huge difference for individuals living with an intellectual disability plus a mental illness."

In order to be considered for the initiative the program leads submitted an expression of interest to the MHCC. As a chosen participant, the ANSU will be described and

highlighted in knowledge products related to addressing structural stigma in Canada's health-care system. The MHCC also hopes that participants will be interested in ongoing research and knowledge mobilization partnership opportunities with them.

Congratulations go to the manager of the ANSU, Oluseye Akinkunmi, program leader **Dr. Mutiat Sulyman**, as well as **Dr. Olugbenga Williams** and the entire clinical team. Participation in the program is set to begin this fall.

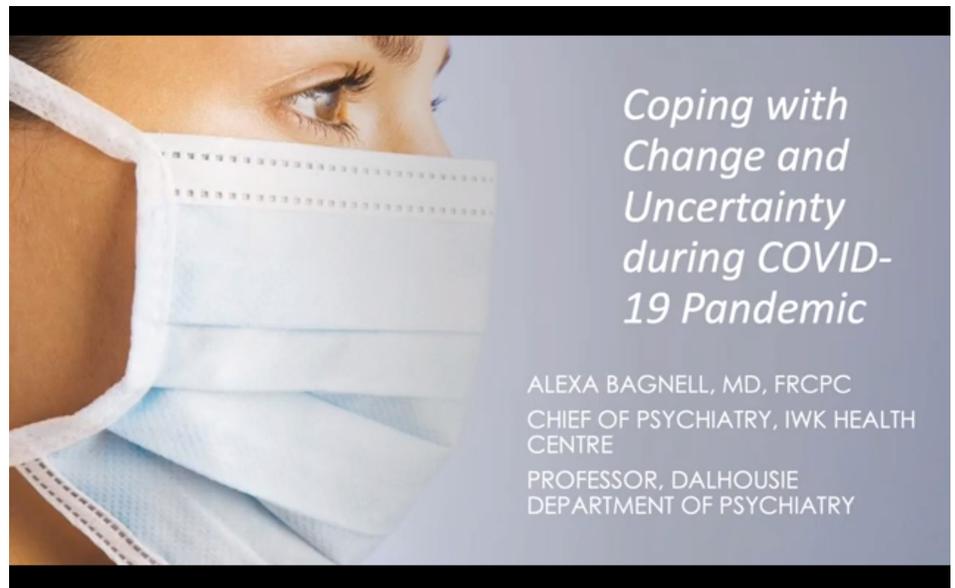
Dr. Alexa Bagnell participates in IWK back to school webinar series

The IWK Mental Health and Addictions Program, in partnership with the Nova Scotia's Department of Early Education and Childhood Development (EECD), has developed a new webinar series entitled *Road to Resilience: Skills and strategies to prepare for the upcoming school year*.

The three webinars are intended to provide the tools, strategies and skills to help prepare parents and children for the upcoming school year. **Dr.**

Alexa Bagnell, head of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and chief of the Department of Psychiatry at IWK Health, delivers the second webinar, *Coping with Change & Uncertainty*.

You can view the webinars by visiting: <http://www.iwk.nshealth.ca/mental-health/parents/road-resilience-webinar-series>.



Dr. George Robertson's paper graces cover of Experimental Neurology

Dr. George Robertson and his colleagues recently published a paper on multiple sclerosis that was chosen as the cover of a recent issue of Experimental Neurology.

The paper, *Neuronal mitochondrial calcium uniporter deficiency exacerbates axonal injury and*

suppresses remyelination in mice subjected to experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis, examines the use of certain drugs in treating neurodegenerative disorders and common psychiatric illnesses. Using mice, Dr. Robertson and his team showed that drugs that improve mobility, axon survival and remyelination by restoring normal mitochondrial function would become

strong therapeutic candidates to halt MS disease progression. By improving mitochondrial function, such drugs may also prove to be useful in treating other neurodegenerative disorders and common psychiatric illnesses.

You can read Dr. Robertson's paper by visiting News & Events on the department website, medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/news-publications.html.

STAFF & FACULTY CHANGES

Arrivals

Dr. Taylor Betsch has joined the department as a lecturer, effective Sept. 8, 2020. Dr. Betsch is working as a hospitalist on 6 Lane at the Abbie J. Lane Building. She can be reached at taylor.betsch@dal.ca or 902-473-6334.

Dr. Daniel Toguri has joined the department as an assistant professor effective, Oct. 2, 2020. Dr. Toguri is working at the East Coast Forensics Hospital and Connections Halifax. He can be reached at Dan.toguri@nshealth.ca or 902-460-7300.

AWARDS & HONOURS

Dr. Ali Manning awarded by MARDOC

Dr. Ali Manning, PGY-6 in child and adolescent psychiatry, has been awarded the Maritime Resident Doctors (MARDOC) Kitt Turney Award for resident wellness for the academic year 2019-2020. This award is presented to one resident member of MARDOC each year to recognize residents who make an outstanding

contribution to resident well-being. She was nominated by her peers for her contribution as a strong team player, having respect for peers and patients, her dedication, her role in enhancing the residency experience for others, her approachability and being a role model for balancing work and personal life. Congratulations Dr. Manning!

Dr. Selene Etches awarded by CACAP

Dr. Selene Etches was recently presented with the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent's (CACAP) Paul Dr. Steinhauer Advocacy Award. Dr. Etches has devoted her career to caring for a unique and complex group of adolescents with concurrent mental health and substance use disorders. Her dedication to the patients and families she serves is unsurpassed. Recognizing the importance of engaging as soon as possible, and the risks of delaying treatment in this patient population, Dr. Etches finds a way to see all patients requesting addictions treatment within a very short window of time. She recognizes that motivation in youth with concurrent disorders fluctuates and it is very important to be accessible and flexible. Since her patients are frequently no longer living at home, Dr. Etches has worked to increase

the network of support for youth with addictions by having outreach workers in shelters and community services programs. She also has established an evidence-based group for parents of youth with addictions that is available to caregivers even if their child is not accessing treatment.

Dr. Etches created the concurrent disorders speciality clinic and helped create standards and recommendations in provincial opioid treatment and cannabis legalization. She gives provincial and national conference and media talks on topics related to adolescent substance use, is an executive board member on the national CRISM (Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse) node for Quebec and the Maritimes, and is the Maritimes representative on the executive board of the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine. In the emergency room and inpatient settings, Dr. Etches has established clear guidelines and teaching modules

for the treatment of youth presenting with intoxication and withdrawal.

Dr. Etches is always available to assist colleagues, and is a sought-after supervisor clinically, providing trainees with a wonderful role model of a dedicated clinician, strong patient advocate and system advocate for evidence-based treatment and practice.

As a champion of equitable and evidence-based mental health and addictions care for youth, Dr. Etches lives and breathes her vision. The change she has been able to evoke in a short eight years at our health centre, for a patient population that has traditionally been ignored, stigmatized and unsupported, is remarkable. She is an inspiration to trainees, faculty, clinicians and the patients she works with. **Dr. Alexa Bagnell** presented Dr. Etches with her award during the virtual CACAP conference on September 14.

Department residents shine at CAGP conference

Several Department of Psychiatry residents were winners at the Canadian Academy of Geriatric (CAGP) conference in mid-October, which was held virtually for the first time. Both **Drs. Marissa LeBlanc** and **Crystal Zhou** won national awards, the CAGP Psychiatry Resident Award and the CAGP Geriatric Psychiatry Subspecialty Resident Award respectively. In addition, **Dr. Amy Gough** presented an outstanding poster with original research in geriatric psychiatry and **Dr. Olga Yaschuk** presented on two separate

projects: destigmatizing dementia with memory cafes and building understanding and empathy through a simulated learning exercise.

Dalhousie has a strong legacy of CAGP award winners to have pursued careers in the field including several on the geriatric psychiatry team here. Past resident and subspecialty award winners include: Dr. Amy Gough (2019); Dr. Daljit Bhangoo (2017); Dr. Vanessa Thoo (2016 and 2013); Dr. Marla Davidson (2009); **Dr. Mark Bosma** (2005); **Dr. Cheryl Murphy** (2004).

Congratulations to the 2020 winners!

Dr. Martin Alda awarded prestigious Colvin Prize

Dr. Martin Alda, along with his colleague Dr. Gustavo Turecki, are joint recipients of the Brain & Behaviour Foundation's Colvin Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Bipolar Mood Disorders Research. Named in honour of the late Oliver D. Colvin Jr., a great benefactor of the foundation, the Colvin Prize was established in 1993. Originally known as the Selo Prize, the Falcone Prize, and then the Bipolar Mood Disorders Prize, it officially became the Colvin Prize in 2012 after Colvin Jr. made the largest single contribution in foundation history.

Dr. Alda is an outstanding researcher and clinician who has made major contributions to the translational research of bipolar disorder. Focusing specifically on the genetic basis of treatment responsiveness in bipolar disorder, he demonstrated that a subtype of bipolar disorder that is responsive to lithium treatment is a highly heritable form of the illness. This finding led Dr. Alda to pursue some of the first molecular genetic studies of lithium response, which included family, linkage and association studies. The genetic approach to a study of lithium response is gaining recognition worldwide as evidenced in the work of the ConLiGen consortium, in which Dr. Alda has been a founding member, as well as in a series of studies of iPSC-derived neurons that Dr. Alda co-authored. Most recently he and **Dr. Abraham Nunes** showed that lithium responsive illness can be differentiated from lithium non-responders with high accuracy based



Dr. Martin Alda

on genome-wide genotypes. Studies of many research groups worldwide have been facilitated by the use of a scale for assessment of long-term treatment response (commonly referred to as the ALDA scale).

In a series of studies, Dr. Alda's group studied the offspring of people with bipolar disorder, who are at elevated genetic risk of developing the condition. They succeeded in mapping the early features of bipolar disorder

and patterns of its clinical course. Together with **Dr. Tomas Hajek**, they identified specific structural brain changes as a risk factor for development of the illness in at-risk children. In a series of studies on suicide behaviour in people with bipolar disorder, Dr. Alda showed that the risk of suicide is a heritable characteristic, associated with specific molecular markers, and confirmed that this risk can be reduced by treatment with lithium. For almost 20

years, Dr. Alda and colleagues studied the comorbidity of bipolar disorder and metabolic changes, showing such comorbidity and insulin resistance in particular, increase the risk of poor clinical outcomes.

Focusing on longitudinal investigations of bipolar disorder, Dr. Alda established unique, and still growing resources: The Maritime Bipolar Registry, and a family collection of clinical data and over 1500 DNA samples as well as over 1000 lymphoblast samples that allow characterization of cellular phenotypes of bipolar disorder and its responsiveness to treatment.

Together, Dr. Alda's work opens the possibility for more rapid and precise

treatment of people with bipolar disorder.

Dr. Alda and Dr. Turecki, whom Dr. Alda mentored, will share the US\$50,000 prize and will be honoured during the foundation's 2020 Annual International Mental Health and Research Symposium on Oct. 30, 2020. Normally in New York City, this year's event will be held virtually because of COVID-19 restrictions. As part of receiving this award, Dr. Alda will present a talk entitled *Thinking Rationally about the Treatment of Bipolar Disorder*. It is available for streaming at <https://www.bbrfoundation.org/events>. Congratulations to Dr. Alda on this incredibly prestigious award.

IN MEMORIAM

The Department was saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Sisinio Villacastin in late August while in his native Philippines. Following his graduation from the Dalhousie Psychiatry Postgraduate Program in 1974, Dr. Villacastin was appointed to the staff at the Nova Scotia Hospital. His kind and courteous manner, allied to a keen clinical acumen, endeared him to his patients and served as an exemplary role-model for learners. His capacity to undertake and manage a prodigious workload earned the well-deserved respect of his colleagues. Following his retirement in 1993, Dr. Villacastin led a rich and productive life in his devotion to his family and continuing his long-term commitment to providing opportunities and support to those in his hometown. His was a life well-lived.



Dr. Sisinio Villacastin

HUMANITIES CORNER



Welcome to new DPRA representative

The Medical Humanities program in the Department of Psychiatry would like to welcome **Dr. Alison Toron**, the new Department of Psychiatry Resident Association (DPRA) representative for the humanities. Alison is a first year psychiatry resident who hails from New Brunswick and completed her medical training at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Prior to her foray into medicine, Alison completed a doctoral degree in English literature, focusing on humour in contemporary Canadian women's fiction. Alison is thrilled to represent her peers and to facilitate connections to humanities-related activities at Dalhousie, with the guidance of Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick, the Medical Humanities coordinator for the Department of Psychiatry. Her first initiative is to organize an online book club focusing on both fiction and non-fiction works



Dr. Alison Toron

with mental health themes. This bimonthly discussion will be open to all interested psychiatry residents, faculty, and staff – keep an eye on your inbox for more details! Alison can

be reached at alison.toron@nshealth.ca.

Karl Jaspers Award 2021

The Association for the Advancement of Philosophy and Psychiatry (AAPP) announces a competition for students and trainees. The Karl Jaspers Award is given for the best paper in the area of philosophy of psychiatry. Eligibility includes medical students, graduate students in philosophy, psychology and related fields, and residents and fellows in psychiatry.

Submission deadline Dec 11, 2020

Full details at <https://philosophyandpsychiatry.org/jaspers-award/>

RESIDENTS' CORNER

Dr. Sophie Church, PGY1, named finalist in Miss Universe Canada pageant

Dr. Sophie Church, who joined our residency program in July, was named a semi-finalist in Canada's top pageant, Miss Universe Canada. The event, which holds the right to send one delegate to the Miss Universe competition each year, took place on October 24 in Toronto. Each year the organizers of the event select charities for the Miss Universe Canada delegates to raise awareness for and fundraise. This year the charities selected are SOS Children's Villages, a global organization that provides assistance to children in developing nations in the realms of shelter, education, and social connection, and Feed it Forward, a Canadian not-for-profit that aims to address food insecurity in Canada while reducing food waste.

Miss Universe Canada also includes a large public speaking program, where delegates visit middle schools and high schools to discuss anti-bullying, goal-setting and the value of education.

Dr. Church has competed in pageants over the years and found the experience to be very empowering. "I was a kid who didn't have a lot of confidence in myself, but that experience really brought me out of my shell and taught me a lot of valuable skills." She also notes the enormous changes that have taken place in the pageant industry, with a real shift towards celebrating diversity



Dr. Sophie Church

and appointing titleholders who have something important to share with the world.

Dr. Church hopes to use this opportunity as a platform to speak about social issues, especially mental health and addictions. "I want to raise awareness for the issues in the system, and how individual people are affected," she says. If chosen as the winner, she says she would be very interested to hear from residents and faculty who are already involved in mental health activism to find out

how she could best help. "I also want to use the speaking campaign to show young women that they can have many varied interests and encourage them to pursue their goals," she says. "It's okay to love science, technology, or medicine and also have an interest in fashion, beauty and the arts."

If you would like to learn more about Miss Universe Canada and the work they do, please visit <https://missuniversecanada.ca/>

PHOTO FEATURE



Remembering spring (Photo by Dr. Suzanne Zinck).

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 Jan. 4, 2021, with the deadline for submissions to be Dec. 11 2020.

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