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HEADLINES



**DR. JOANNE MACDONALD RETIRES FROM
THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AFTER
30 YEARS**



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURES

**DR. JOANNE MACDONALD RETIRES FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AFTER 30 YEARS**

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HEAD LINES

Message from the Department Head

The Department of Psychiatry has a bright year ahead and there is much to look forward to in 2023.

Our annual student writing competition, open to medical students, residents, and fellows in Canada, is accepting submissions. The competition closes on May 1, 2023 and the winning entries will be announced in a future issue of *Headlines* and will be posted on the department's website.

This spring, we will host our annual conference, W.O. McCormick Academic Day, in person. Academic Day will be held on Friday, April 21, 2023 at the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel. Please watch for registration details. I hope you will be able to join us.

On the research side, there are several successes highlighted in this issue we are proud to acknowledge, including congratulations to our researchers who have been successful with their CIHR applications.

The deadline for the spring intake of applications for the Department of Psychiatry Research Fund is upcoming on April 3, 2023, and we are also preparing to welcome a new group of students this summer for the Summer Studentship program.

This issue will also note some of the administrative changes the department is undergoing with changes in positions, and ongoing recruitment.



Dr. Vincent Agyapong

As you'll read in this issue of *Headlines*, we will say goodbye to Dr. Joanne MacDonald who is retiring in March after 30 years of service with the department. Please join me in wishing her all the best in this new chapter. She will be missed.

The department has also hosted meetings and events to advance its priorities. Of note is the inaugural meeting of the NS/NB Psychiatry Academic Council, a meeting focused on electroconvulsive therapy research, a meeting with the Department of Health and Wellness, as well as various retreats.

To end on a very positive note, we congratulate two department members, Dr. Emmanuel Aquino and Dr. Patricia Lingley-Pottie, who each received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal. Dr. Lingley-Pottie was

also awarded the eMental Health International Collaborative's 2022 Implementation Leadership Award for Canada, and, along with members of the Strongest Families Institute team, was awarded Canada's 13 Premiers Council of Federation's Award for Innovation in Mental Health and Addictions. Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick was appointed chair of the Canadian Psychiatric Association's Public Policy Committee, and the Memory Café NS, developed by Dr. Beverley Cassidy, won the Grass Roots Award from the Alzheimer's Society of Canada. Congratulations to all on your accomplishments.

Dr. Vincent Agyapong
Head, Department of Psychiatry,
Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie
University
Chief, Department of Psychiatry,
NSHA Central Zone

Dr. Joanne MacDonald retires from the Department of Psychiatry after 30 years

In March, the department will bid farewell to longtime faculty member, Dr. **Joanne MacDonald**, as she retires after 30 years.

A self-described “Dal lifer,” Dr. MacDonald began her time at Dalhousie University when she completed her medical degree (1980-1984), and her Psychiatry residency (1984-1989). She joined the Department of Psychiatry as part-time faculty in 1993.

Dr. MacDonald has held various positions within the Department of Psychiatry and the Faculty of Medicine throughout her career. In the Department of Psychiatry, these have included Psychiatrist Lead for the REACH (Regulating Emotion and Attachment for Community Health) project, Psychiatrist Advisor and Co-Investigator to the FORBOW research team, and Director of Humanities. She also held the positions of Assistant Dean Student Affairs and Wellness Advisor for the Undergraduate Medical Education program in the Faculty of Medicine.

Dr. MacDonald is a recipient of the Department of Psychiatry’s Outstanding Clinician and Dedicated Service Awards.

“I’ve had a rich professional life within Dal because of the strong

academic curiosity and warmth of now many colleagues,” says Dr. MacDonald. “People here love to work together, have a flexible attitude to how we ‘get ‘er done,’ and an orientation towards bettering our work — bettering the scientific understanding of mental illness, understanding clinical research in what helps people get and stay well, better-to-best education for our learners and colleagues, and better ways of working and collaborating in real time in our communities.”

Although she has enjoyed a fulfilling and rewarding career, becoming a psychiatrist wasn’t her first choice of profession.

“I was always interested in the story of people’s lives and decisions and thought about doing a degree in English,” says Dr. MacDonald.

However, she opted to study Nutrition because it seemed more practical. During her nutrition training in hospitals, she observed doctors daily. Deciding what they did looked like more fun and more of a challenge, she pursued medical school.

“My initial specialty interest was equally split between Obstetrics/Gynecology and Psychiatry.”

She chose Psychiatry. But her passion for women’s health and people’s stories continued.

Dr. MacDonald began her career with the Hants County Community Mental Health clinic in Windsor, NS. She also held a private practice in Halifax focused on women’s mental health. In 1993, she returned to the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the Department of Psychiatry part-time with the Consultation-Liaison Service, before assuming the lead role for the NSHA Central Zone CLS.

A singular pride and focus

Dr. MacDonald credits this early period for deepening her interest in maternal mental health. It immersed her in the range of mental health problems women patients in particular experience.

With the IWK amalgamation of maternal and child health services, she assumed a new lead role. Under Dr. MacDonald’s leadership, the single consultation model was developed into a full interdisciplinary mental health clinical care and consultation team devoted to pregnant and postpartum women.

This new interdisciplinary team became her “singular pride and

focus,” notes Dr. MacDonald, who led the team from 2004 to 2016.

Establishing the Reproductive Mental Health Service has been particularly rewarding, she says.

“It has not been ‘niche’ work in my experience, but intervention at a critical point in family, and ultimately, community development and an aspect of early intervention/health prevention in mental illness risk in general.”

A national toolkit

Dr. MacDonald became more interested and invested in early development and opportunities within the parent-child relationship, and in early intervention models to prevent mental illness in vulnerable families.

She was recruited by the Public Health Agency of Canada to work with community support providers on a national guide and educational program. The result was the Maternal Mental Health Toolkit – a workbook-type resource and national train-the-trainer model for Family Resource Centre staff and their colleagues.

A key accomplishment in Dr. MacDonald’s career, the project was a professional growth experience, allowing her to learn new skills and draw on her personal aptitude in a different way from clinical care, she says.

The toolkit is still in use. Recently, an edited version for Primary Care providers – The Primary Care Perinatal Mental Health Toolkit – launched with RMHS, Dalhousie Family Medicine, and Reproductive Care

Program in NS in November 2022.

A time for reflection

“There is no one career highlight really,” says Dr. MacDonald.

“I have a ‘file’ in my head of all the women and their families, their stories, how they wanted to reach for health and wellbeing, to interrupt intergenerational risk and trauma, the funny and tragic moments they were generous to share with me, so it’s like a large, complex, tapestry of stories for me, stories I got to be in and not just read about.”

Dr. MacDonald believes the department is enriched by its diversity of perspectives and membership, which the department’s commitment to diversity underscores.

“We appreciate one another more in a sense because we are not all the same, can bring different prior experiences, cultures, and perspectives to difficult work.”

Along the way, she has benefited from the support of her colleagues, many of whom brought friendship along with their professional knowledge.

“I’ll miss being part of a team, part of something larger in terms of an identity as a clinical provider,” she says.

A new chapter

As she retires, Dr. MacDonald is thinking about what will fill the pages of the next chapter in her own story.

“Being a doctor, and a psychiatrist in particular, has been this immersion in lives outside of my own, what the trends and challenges are in the community, what matters to people.

“What’s next is a bit more flexible time with family and friends, for reflection over action, time in my home in Prince Edward Island, maybe some writing, an actual exercise ‘routine.’ But I’d like to stay connected to young people, particularly in Medicine, to understand what they think and feel in their professional and personal lives.”

Research Report

DEPARTMENT FUNDING

UPCOMING DEADLINES

Psychiatry Summer Studentship Program

Deadline: February 10, 2023

The Psychiatry Summer Studentship Program is designed to provide a number of qualified undergraduate students with an opportunity to become involved in research in the Department of Psychiatry over a period in the summer. Although this program in effect provides summer employment for students, faculty supervisors are expected not to treat summer students in this program as technicians, but rather to involve them fully in discussion and the design of experiments. This program offers students an opportunity to learn new research techniques as they acquire hands on experience in running experiments and analyzing data.

To apply for the Psychiatry Summer Studentship Program please contact **Anila Balakrishnan** (Research Coordinator) at anila.balakrishnan@nshealth.ca

Department of Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF) – April 2023 intake

Deadline: April 3, 2023

To apply for the DPRF April 2023 intake, please contact **Anila Balakrishnan** (Research Coordinator) at anila.balakrishnan@nshealth.ca

RECENT EXTERNAL FUNDING

- Dr. **Aaron Keshen** (PI), Neal Henderson, Emilie Lacroix, Susan Gamberg, Sara Bartel, Abraham Nunes, Phil Tibbo, Jessica Wournell, Brynn Kelly

Utilizing Peer Mentors to Improve Transitions for Youth with Eating Disorders: A Feasibility Study

Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF) - (\$99,999)

- Dr. **Aaron Keshen** (PI), Emilie Lacroix, Sara Bartel, Susan Gamberg, Jessica Wournell

A feasibility study examining the implementation of a brief, group-based intervention for eating disorders in Nova Scotia

QEII Foundation (Nova Scotia), Translating Research into Care (TRIC) - (\$47,131)

- Dr. **Phil Tibbo** - Vice-President Research & Innovation International Seed Fund (VPRIIS Fund)

Cross-validation of outcome prediction models in Early Intervention Services in Psychosis Programs internationally

- Dr. **Kara Dempster** - Brain and Behavior Research Foundation 2022 Young Investigator Grant

A prospective study of anterior cingulate cortex glutamate

in first episode psychosis and subsequent treatment resistance

(\$78,901.80 between 2023-2025)

- Dr. **JianLi Wang** (PI)

Co-investigators: Tibbo P, Uher R, Alda M, Stewart SH, Meier S, Kephart G, Weerasinghe S, Feng C, Simon P, Agyapong V.

Collaborators: Harris A, Wozney L.

Predicting emergency department visits and hospitalization among the clients of Nova Scotia Mental Health and Addiction central intake assessment.

Research Nova Scotia. New Health Investigator Grant. (\$100,000) - 2023-2025.

- Dr. **Cynthia Calkin** with collaborator Hadar Shalev:

The role of insulin resistance, inflammation, and brain vasculature in psychiatric illness

Brain Repair Centre (\$70,000)

CIHR Grants:

- Congratulations to Dr. **Derek Fisher** (Co-PI with Dr. Natalia Jaworska) for their successful 5-Year CIHR Project Grant

Co-Investigators: Dr. Phil Tibbo and Dr. Tomas Hajek

Characterizing the Neural Profiles of Bipolar Disorder with and without Auditory Hallucinations

- Congratulations to Dr. **Tomas Hajek** and his team for his successful fall CIHR grant: *Obesity, brain structure and cognitive functioning in major psychiatric disorders - large scale, multicenter study* (4-year study)

- Congratulations to Dr. **Rudolf Uher** and his team for his successful CIHR clinical trial project grant: *Optimized Predictive Treatment In Medications for Unipolar Major Depression (OPTIMUM-D)* (5-year study)

PUBLICATIONS

Dr. **Mahmoud Awara's** paper, "The psychiatric and neurological interface of multiple sclerosis: case report and literature review," was published in the *European Journal of Medical Case Reports*, Volume 7(1), and can be viewed [here](#).

TRIO-BD study gaining recognition

By Dr. Cynthia Calkin

New paradigm-shifting ideas can be slow to catch on, but the TRIO-BD (Treating insulin Resistance to Improve Outcome in Bipolar Disorder) study has been gaining traction world-wide. Lead by Principal Investigator and Sponsor, Dr. **Cindy Calkin**, and funded by the Stanley Medical Research Institute, the study demonstrated significant improvements in depression, anxiety and overall functioning in treatment resistant bipolar depressed patients after reversal of insulin resistance.

For a free download of the paper: <https://www.psychiatrist.com/jcp/bipolar/treating-insulin-resistance-metformin-strategy-improve-clinical-outcomes-treatment-resistant-bipolar-depression-trio-bd-study/>

Podcast with Harvey Schwartz: <https://harveyschwartzmd.com/2022/11/04/ep-38-bipolar-disease-insulin-resistance-and-metformin-new-research-with-cynthia-calkin-md/>

Baszucki talk; Metabolic Mind

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/KHoJkq8vir>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjbHfvHc5d0&t=66s>



Dr. Cindy Calkin.



Dr. Cindy Calkin presenting.

New research space for Dr. Hajek and Mood Disorder clinic

We are pleased to announce a new research space for Dr. **Hajek** and the Mood Disorders clinic. This is a timely addition, as in the last year, Dr. Hajek was awarded two CIHR grants as a principal investigator, one as a co-investigator, and also a NIH subaward. Dr. Hajek's lab has been studying clinical variables associated with brain changes in bipolar disorders, including effects of medications, obesity, and related metabolic alterations.



Education Report

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

With the arrival of January comes the start of preparations for the 2023/2024 academic year. In the coming weeks, **Kelly Hancock** will be in touch regarding clerkship rotation scheduling and tutor recruitment.

Please note the upcoming contests for medical students — please encourage your students to apply:

- Dalhousie Psychiatry's **Annual Humanities Writing Contest**, open to medical

students and residents, will be held again this year. All submissions to be in by **May 1, 2023**. More details and specific contest rules can be found on page 27.

- The Department of Psychiatry supports the travel expenses of a Dalhousie medical student interested in psychiatry to attend the annual Psychiatry Student Interest Group Network (PsychSIGN) conference held in conjunction with

the American Psychiatric Association (APA) conference. Submission deadline is **March 3, 2023**.

Contest details will be distributed to students through the Psychiatry Interest Group and the Dalhousie Medical Students' Society newsletter, as well as posted on our departmental website.

Undergraduate Education in **Psychiatry**



PsychSIGN National Conference

The Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry is interested in supporting medical students who are considering psychiatry as a potential career.

We are offering to provide the travel costs for one student from Dalhousie Medicine to attend the annual Psychiatry Student Interest Group Network (psychSIGN) conference held in conjunction each year with the American Psychiatric Association (APA) conference.

The psychSIGN conference is otherwise free for students to attend (registration, accommodations, and some meals).

This year's APA conference is in **San Francisco, May 20–24, 2023**.

Please see the psychSIGN website for specifics of the conference and information regarding accommodations and registration.*

We recommend pre-registering asap to ensure a spot is saved for you, in case you win!

www.psychsign.org

If you are interested in attending:

- Submit a brief (1 page) letter outlining the reason(s) for your interest in attending the conference to Dr. Katharine Black, Psychiatry Undergraduate Director at katharine.black@nshealth.ca
- **Submissions must be received by Friday, March 3, 2023 at 5pm** to be considered. From all submissions, 1 student will be selected and will be notified by March 17, 2023.
- Following the conference, the successful student will be asked to submit a brief (1-2 paragraph) summary of their experience at the conference, describing what they gained from attendance, for publication in the Department of Psychiatry newsletter, *Headlines*.

Tel: 902.473.5633 | Fax: 902.473.4545 | kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca



POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

Resident Mid-Year Oral Exams

The PGY 2, 3, and 4s completed their mid-year oral exams virtually in December. Thanks to the dedicated group of faculty who regularly take time out of their week to act as examiners.

CaRMS

CaRMS will be taking place virtually this year on February 7, 9, 23, 24.

Thank you in advance to all the faculty, residents, and staff for your participation. CaRMS is the MOST important postgraduate

event of the year, and we cannot move forward without your cooperation.

FELLOWSHIP AND SUBSPECIALTY TRAINING NEWS

GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRY SUBSPECIALTY PROGRAM

Geriatric Psychiatry Resident to complete elective in South Africa

Our PGY-6 resident Dr. **Amy Gough** will be doing a six-week Old Age Psychiatry elective in South Africa, at the University of Cape Town.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY SUBSPECIALTY PROGRAM

CAP SUBSPECIALTY UPDATES

C&A Psychiatry Subspecialty

The child and adolescent psychiatry subspecialty program are pleased to announce that Dr. **Kyle Godden** will begin his residency training with us in January 2024.

Accreditation – Internal Review

The child and adolescent psychiatry had their internal accreditation review on November 14. The review of the subspecialty program was successful, with minor recommendations from the reviewers.

CAP EDUCATION

Journal Club

The CAP Journal Club was held on January 16, with Dr. **Emily Fraser** presenting.

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PSYCHIATRY RESEARCH

Our 2022-2023 graduate program is well underway. Our six new MSc. and two new PhD students are well immersed into their graduate courses. Two more courses are taking place in Winter 2023, including a new course, called “Advanced Experiential Psychiatry.” This course will attempt to provide our PhD students an understanding of the practice of clinical mental health care and the experience of having a mental illness and how this integrates with research.

Clinician experiences, as well as persons with lived and living experience, will take part in presenting the content of this course. Dr. **Frank MacMaster**, along with Dr. **Aaron Keshen** and Dr. **Gail Eskes**, are the lead for this course.

The second course is a graduate level introductory statistics course for our MSc. students. Dr. **Igor Yakavenko** is the instructor for this course.

Our second year MSc. students are now finalizing their data collection and thesis writing and are beginning their preparations for spring/summer defenses. We intend to have our MSc. defenses run in person this coming spring/summer. All faculty and students are welcome to attend. As each defense is organized, **Anila** will be sending out information regarding time and location. We expect to have six Masters students defending this spring/summer.

Our second year PhD students are in the process of finalizing their comprehensive examinations. One aspect of these exams is a formal defense of their dissertation proposal. These exams will mirror what is expected from the students at their dissertation defense. These, as well, will be open to faculty and students to attend. Anila will be sending out information as it becomes available.

Our Graduate Program Committee recently met and made decisions on our September 2023 class. Admission offer letters have been sent out. Prospective students have until March 31 to accept or decline our offers. The quality of applicants has been exceptional.

Finally, we will be notified regarding the successes of our students for internal and external awards later this month.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT/CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WORKSHOPS

Two successful workshops were held:

- **Nov. 18, 2022:** Person Centered Mental Health Services: A Workshop, presented by Dr. **Abraham Rudnick**, Head of the Section of Community Psychiatry
- **Jan. 20, 2023:** Academic Career Development for Psychiatrists who Identify as Women, presented by Dr. **Lara Hazelton**, Deputy Head, and Director of Education

More workshops will be offered in the spring.

ROUNDS

Rounds continues every week, and we'll be welcoming Dr. Jillian Horton from the University of Manitoba to Grand Rounds in February.

SAVE THE DATE

W.O. McCORMICK ACADEMIC DAY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday, April 21, 2023

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. **times approximate*

The Westin Nova Scotian Hotel (in person)

This year's theme is **Neuropsychiatry**

Watch for registration details.

Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

CAP Strategic Direction Retreat

On January 13, the child and adolescent psychiatry faculty attended a retreat aimed at establishing the priorities for our strategic direction. Faculty were engaged in thoughtful discussions and innovative thinking at ways to enhance and improve our practices in the four main pillars: Education, Research, Clinical, and Governance, Leadership & Advocacy. Each pillar was assigned a table and two hosts from the CAP Executive. Faculty participated in a strategic direction 'speed dating' where each faculty member had an opportunity to discuss current strengths and weaknesses, visions of future work and potential challenges, and additional areas of importance. The information gathered from this retreat will be collated and reviewed by CAP executive and then presented to faculty meeting for final approvals in late February.



Faculty Updates

Congratulations to Dr. **Jennifer Cumming** and Dr. **Chelcie Soroka** who passed their Royal College Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty exam in November.

CAP in the news

January 25 was Bell Let's Talk Day. Dr. **Bagnell** was interviewed by CTV News to discuss mental health in youth. Her interview can be found here: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2616750>

Campbell, LA, Clark, S.E., Chorney, J., Emberly, D., MacDonald, J., MacKenzie, A., Warner, G., Wozney, L. (2022). Choice and Partnership Approach to community mental health and addictions: A realist informed scoping review. *BMJ Open*, 12, e064436. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2022-064436

CAP Faculty Retreat

The Atlantic Canada Child and Adolescent (faculty) retreat was held on November 18 both virtually and in person. Dr. **Robichaud** presented on Gender Identity & Autism. And Dr. **Jill Chorney**, Dr. **Leslie Anne Campbell** & Ms. **Miriam Daneff** presented "Virtual Care: Bridging Research and Practice."

The next retreat is scheduled for April 28.

CAP Research

Our faculty continue to be productive with several publications recently, including:

Manning A (2022). The Goldilocks of Social Justice Education: Balint Groups as a Curricular Intervention to Support Equitable Health Care. *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 912174221123612. [Published] PubMed ID: [36042565](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36042565/).

CAP Presentations

Dr. **Selene Etches** presented "Working with youth who use substances" at the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine conference on November 3.

Dr. **Alexa Bagnell** presented "Anxiety, OCD & related disorders" at the National Child Day Symposium in Saint John, NB on November 18.

Dr. **Alexandra Manning** presented "Psychiatry Residents' Experience of Balint Group" at

the International Conference on Residency Education. She also presented “Balint Groups: fostering connectedness & wellbeing in residency education” at both the International Conference on Residency Education and the Program Administrators Conference in October.

Dr. **Alexa Bagnell** presented “OCD +/- PANS/PANDAS” at a CHEO Psychopharmacology workshop series on November 17.

The division was also well represented at the

Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Conference in October with Dr. **Sabina Abidi** and Dr. **Sarah Fancy** presenting a workshop and Dr. **Alexa Bagnell** presented a poster.

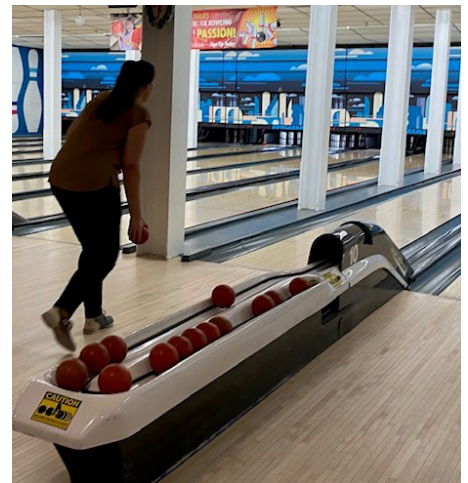
Abidi S., Fancy S., “Managing your distress: identifying and managing physicians’ discomfort with Clozapine use for youth with treatment resistant schizophrenia” Workshop Presentation. American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Oct. 19, 2022, Toronto Ontario.

Bagnell A, Campbell LA, Carrey N, Chorney J, *Virtual Care in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: Considerations for Shared Decision Making and System Improvement*, Poster Presentation at the AACAP/CACAP Annual Meeting in Toronto, October 17-22, 2022.

Section of Geriatric Psychiatry

The Geriatric Psychiatry program held a wellness event in the fall, where faculty and residents went bowling.

Drs. **Amy Gough** and **Kathleen Singh** showed their prowess with most spares. Drs. **Keri-Leigh Cassidy** and **Mark Bosma** were high scorers. Everyone enjoyed themselves and are looking forward to the spring event.



Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry

An inpatient psychiatry retreat was held the afternoon of December 16. Present were all members of the inpatient psychiatric team (Dr. **Davis**, Dr. **Paradis**, Dr. **Lahti**, Dr. **Pianos**, Dr. **Sadek**, Dr. **Holm**, and Dr. **Peters** as well as Section Head Dr. **Sridharan** and Deputy Section Head Dr. **Arenella**) who were joined by Dr. **Agyapong** and Interim Director **Matt White**.

There was some time for some fun as well. Fun fact of the day... If you ever need to land a plane, look for our very own “top gun” Dr. Anthony Pianos!!!!

More retreats to come and thanks to all contributors for the excellent job that was done.

Physicians took turns presenting on a variety of topics including:

1. Enhancing respectful and collegial working relationships between psychiatrists and nurses and allied mental health professionals
2. Building trust: Addressing complaints from psychiatrists, nurses, and allied mental health professionals through timely transparent communication
3. Enhancing patient care: ward rounds, family meetings, case conferences, and second opinions
4. Culture of continuous quality improvement

The presentations were excellent and the conversations were productive in keeping with the department’s goals of being leaders in leading practice and professional collaboration.



Section of **Community Psychiatry**

The section of community psychiatry has continued to actively recruit psychiatrists; in January 2023, Dr. Mahmoud Gad joined the Dartmouth and Cobequid clinics from IWK.

Projects continue to be planned and implemented. Shared care expanded in October 2022 to include the Dalhousie family medicine clinics in Spryfield and Mumford, with Dr. Aaron Keshen's leadership (supervising senior psychiatry residents there

as well as ongoing at North End). Transcultural psychiatry expanded in December 2022 to include a Ukrainian newcomers stream (with Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak's consultations).

Relevant administrative changes are occurring at the Nova Scotia Health Authority end, e.g., since January 2023, Central Intake for central zone is part of provincial intake with one manager provincially, and the co-leadership structure for

community mental health and addiction services is changing in February 2023 so that there will no longer be a program leader for these services.

Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** will end his tenure as head of the section of community psychiatry at the end of March 2023 and will be replaced in that role in the interim by Dr. **Mahmoud Awara**.

Section of **Forensic Psychiatry**

These are exciting yet challenging times at the East Coast Forensic Hospital. We are in the middle of reshaping forensic clinical services for the province while keeping an eye on the academic mandate with developing some infrastructure for research.

As part of the new model of care, we are more than 50% done with the PCNA (Patient Care Needs Assessment) project of collecting data to incorporate. The next step would be to involve stakeholders from justice, community services, CCRB members, and families.

Restructuring the way we do our work and care for patients with the available resources requires some creative thinking and we have plenty of that within our teams. We are also recruiting team members for specific tasks.

Soon we will embark on a physical update in our facility to deal with challenging dynamics, but we welcome the challenge.

Like many other areas of Mental Health, we are recruiting. A position is available for a Forensic/Correction Psychiatrist, and we would like to hear from anyone interested.

DaRT Program – The Therapeutic Milieu creates a haven for health and healing

By Dr. Jackie Kinley

The Dynamic attachment focused Relational Therapy (DaRT) program is an intensive treatment service for complicated and treatment-resistant patients in the Atlantic region. DaRT offers a unique approach that delivers clinical services within a safe therapeutic milieu, making it very effective for patients, thus potentially reducing the demand on other mental health services.

Coming to terms with core unresolved feelings associated with attachment traumas is a key aspect of the program.

The therapeutic environment is commonly acknowledged as a significant influence on treatment experiences and outcomes. Patients with complex mental illness have unique psychological needs that require a safe environment to engage and benefit from treatment. Our therapeutic milieu (operating within the treatment groups in addition to more informal aspects of the program) is essential in providing a safe and contained setting. It is by way of this milieu and other program components that our patients can create the internal sense of belonging and trust (safety and support) necessary to engage in intensive emotion-focused and attachment-based work. Patients are encouraged to interact with group members and use what they have learned to obtain a significant clinical impact on themselves. New skills are



DaRT program patient lounge.

applied in the program's 'real-world context,' thereby providing a realistic and reasonable path to wellness. The therapeutic milieu is more than just the setting. It is a healing culture rich in therapeutic interpersonal interactions and cooperative attentiveness to the specific therapeutic needs of patients.

Creating a therapeutic milieu requires considerable thought and attention to physical location. The environment must consist of social and psychological safe spaces that are specifically designed to be healing and to deliver the various treatment components. This requires a conscious and intentional effort to create "a haven of health and healing:" a physical and interactive space.

An appropriate physical location is foundational and imperative for creating a therapeutic milieu for our patients that will support and enhance progress toward treatment goals, personal growth, and positive change.



DaRT program group room.

Department News

Department Leadership Retreat

The department hosted a leadership retreat on Nov. 25, 2022 at the Dalhousie Student Union Building. Clinical, education and research leaders were invited to attend the retreat, which included presentations and facilitated discussions.

Dr. **Lara Hazelton**, Deputy Head and Director of Education for the Department of Psychiatry, welcomed everyone and gave an overview of the day. Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, Department Head, provided introductory remarks and spoke about the distributed leadership model. From there, attendees participated in a facilitated

discussion, in the world café format, about expanding our departmental mandate. Dr. Hazelton led the discussion and Drs. **Mutiati Sulyman**, Director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA); **Zenovia Ursuliak**, Director of Wellness; and, **Keri-Leigh Cassidy**, Director of Social Policy and Advocacy were the table hosts for their respective areas.

The attendees also heard a presentation from **Brent Powers**, Director for Physician Services, NSH, about approaches to developing a respectful workplace and early resolution of conflict. This was followed by

a presentation from Dr. **Alexa Bagnell**, Division Head, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, IWK, and **Maureen Brennan**, Director, IWK Mental Health and Addictions Program, about effective co-leadership. The day concluded with a presentation by **Lorie Campbell**, Executive Leadership Coach, NSH, about maximizing personal effectiveness in leadership.

After the event, a feedback survey was circulated to aid with future planning. Our thanks to all the presenters and attendees for an insightful and productive day.





Dalhousie NS/NB Psychiatry Academic Council Inaugural Meeting

The newly-established Dalhousie NS/NB Psychiatry Academic Council held its first meeting in December 2022.

ECT Research Meeting

Dr. Vincent Agyapong, along with other department members, recently participated in a meeting discussing electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) research. This meeting stems from an area of potential collaboration that was identified during Dr. Agyapong’s visits with distributed learning sites in the fall.



In November, the department participated in a meeting with Barbaree Palmer, Project Executive at the Department of Health & Wellness, to share information about the department and the transformational plan.

From left to right: Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Head, Department of Psychiatry; Dr. Alexa Bagnell, Division Head, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, IWK; Barbaree Palmer, Project Executive, Department of Health & Wellness; Dr. Risk Kronfli, Head, Section of Forensic Psychiatry; and, David Potter, Chief Operating Officer, Department of Psychiatry.

Presentation at ICRE

Drs. **Alexandra Manning, Matt Havenga** and **Nadine Nejati** presented a workshop entitled “Balint Groups: fostering connectedness and wellbeing in residency education” in October at the 2023 International Conference on Residency Education (ICRE) and the ICRE Program Administrator’s Conference in Montreal.



IN MEMORIAM: Dr. Charles Ernest Taylar

Dr. Taylar was assistant professor of Psychiatry at Dalhousie Medical School and a lecturer at the Department of Family Medicine. He served as President of the Nova Scotia Psychiatric Association, Chairman of the Section of Psychiatry of the Nova Scotia Medical Society, and during his term in these positions,

arranged an amalgamation of the two bodies. He also was involved as executive of the Halifax Medical Society, General Council, Chairman of the Economic Committee -section of Psychiatry Nova Scotia Medical Society, Psychiatric Consultant to the Behavior Modification Clinic, Director of the Forensic Clinic at Abbey Lane Hospital

and consultant to the Springhill Institution of Correctional Services. Later years were spent in private practice from his home.

Dr. Taylar’s complete obituary is available [here](#).

Condolences to Dr. Taylar’s family.

STAFF CHANGES

We were pleased to announce **Jen Brown** was the successful candidate for the Operations Manager position in the Department of Psychiatry. Many of you know Jen as she’s been a valuable contributor to the department – the role she is vacating (Postgraduate Coordinator) will be competed in the coming weeks.

The Operations Manager is a new position that will provide guidance and support to the

department admin team and help manage the increasing activities within the department. Jen officially started in her new role on Dec. 12, 2022. Congratulations Jen!

We began the new year without **Baoya Song**, our IT Support and Database Coordinator, who has started a new position with MedIT in the Faculty of Medicine. Baoya joined the Department of Psychiatry in August 2021, splitting his time evenly

between the Department of Psychiatry and Family Medicine. Congratulations Baoya and we wish you the best in your new role!

Resident Holiday Party - Friday, Dec. 9, 2022



AWARDS & HONOURS

Dr. Patricia Lingley-Pottie honoured three times for her innovative leadership

By Strongest Families Institute

In October 2022, Dr. **Patricia Lingley-Pottie**, President and CEO of Strongest Families Institute, along with members of Strongest Families' IT team, joined Premier Tim Houston, the Honourable Brian Cormer and Starr Cunningham from the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia to celebrate the *Canada's 13 Premiers Council of Federation's Award for Innovation in Mental Health and Addictions*.

The award is granted to individuals and organizations across the county who demonstrate how they are embracing innovations and sharing their learnings through knowledge translation. Strongest Families received the Council of Federation award for its innovative approach on a newly released mobile app (funded by Bell Let's Talk) that works in tandem with Strongest Families' mental health programming,

The eMental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC) honoured Dr. Lingley-Pottie in December 2022, by naming her as the recipient of its *2022 Implementation Leadership Award for Canada*. The awards were given out during eMHIC's Congress held in Auckland, New Zealand. Dr. Lingley-Pottie joined mental health leaders from six other countries (Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Singapore and the United States) who received a similar award. eMHIC is a collective where leaders and

experts in eMental Health and Addiction come together to share learnings, best practices, and collaborate across borders.

And in February 2023, Dr. Lingley-Pottie proudly received a *Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal* in recognition

of her stellar commitment to the province's mental health and wellness especially during COVID. She is one of 5,000 Nova Scotians who received the medal after having been nominated by Nova Scotia MLAs, businesses, organizations and/or residents.



Dr. Lingley-Pottie and some Strongest Families' team members were honoured at Province House by Premier Tim Houston and his colleagues for its innovative new mobile app.



Starr Cunningham, President & CEO, Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia presents Dr. Lingley-Pottie with the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.

Dr. Emmanuel Aquino honoured with Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal for contributions to mental health community

By Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia

On Tuesday, January 24, the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia honoured six individuals with the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee medal. Dr. **Emmanuel Aquino** was one of them.

The Foundation recognized Dr. Aquino as a psychiatrist, philanthropist, and all-round people person. In 2016, Dr. Aquino also received the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia's Let's Keep Talking Outstanding Healthcare Provider Award for his exceptional commitment to helping those who live with mental illness and addiction.

"We are very fortunate to work in the same building as Dr. Aquino," says Foundation President & CEO Starr Cunningham. "We get to see him interact with his patients, their family members, and his colleagues. It's always a brighter day when Dr. Aquino stops by our office – whether it's to make a donation, share some news, or simply say hello."

For all that Dr. Aquino has done, and continues to do, to make our province a better place, the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia is incredibly proud to recognize him with this prestigious honour.



Dr. Emmanuel Aquino and Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia Trustee, Darrell Johnston. Photos by Kelly Clark.



Dr. Howard Conter, Morgan Manzer, Dr. Belinda Seagram, Starr Cunningham, Darrell Johnston, Cecilia McRae and Dr. Emmanuel Aquino.

Dr. Vincent Agyapong to present at 2023 APA Annual Meeting

Department Head Dr. **Vincent Agyapong** has been invited by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to present an International Lecture on Innovation, access to care, and

promoting psychiatry and mental health in Ghana at the 2023 APA Annual Meeting, May 20-24 in San Francisco, CA. The theme of the 2023 Annual Meeting is “Innovate, Collaborate, Motivate:

Charting the Future of Mental Health.”

Congratulations Dr. Agyapong!

Dr. Abraham Rudnick Appointed as Chair of CPA Public Policy Committee

Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** has been appointed chair of the Canadian Psychiatric Association’s Public Policy

Committee (PPC). The PPC provides expert advice and leadership to the CPA on current issues and important matters

impacting mental health public policy.

Congratulations Dr. Rudnick!

Memory Café NS, developed by Geriatric Psychiatrist, wins Grass Roots Award

Memory Café NS, developed by Dr. **Beverley Cassidy**, recently won the Grass Roots award from the Alzheimer’s Society of Canada at a dementia advocacy awards ceremony on Jan. 15, 2023.

Memory Café NS provides innovative health promotion with collaboration between municipalities, local businesses, artists, health care providers, support organizations, and volunteers. With her organizational skills she has been able to spread the Memory Café to many areas in Nova Scotia including Cape Breton, Claire, Digby, Argyle/ Yarmouth and most recently Lunenburg.

The Nova Scotia Memory Cafés are in person get-togethers that provide fun and positive social events. Her passion for this project has attracted many facilitators and artists such as Holly Carr who painted a piece

which included the themes from the participant’s own stories. The Memory Cafés also include francophone cafés in the Acadian regions.

Dr. Cassidy ensured that the website: <https://memorycafens.ca> has free downloadable resources in French and English to enable others in NS to launch their own memory café. It includes live music videos from the workshops, an extensive e-book library, and videos for doing chair yoga in your own home. When Covid precautions were in place, the cafés adapted with online video socialization and mailouts of activity materials.

For more information:

<https://wolffville.ca/news-and-notice/win-memory-cafe-and-community>

<https://alzheimer.ca/en/whats-happening/events/dementia-friendly-communities-awards>

<https://memorycafens.ca>

Meet our **Members:** Dr. Raquel Dias

The Department of Psychiatry is home to over 200 faculty. We have expert teachers, researchers, and clinicians among them. In this issue, get to know Dr. **Raquel Dias**, Assistant Professor with the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry, and Research Associate with Nova Scotia Health.



My position at Dalhousie:

I am an Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychiatry at Dal and a Research Associate at the Department of Psychiatry at Nova Scotia Health, working within the Global Mental Health Research Group led by Dr. Vincent Agyapong.

I chose my field because:

My path to becoming a researcher was not straightforward. I am originally from Brazil, where I worked as an Associate Professor in the Pontifical Catholic University's Dietetics and Nutrition Program. After finishing my Ph.D., I moved to Canada to pursue a postdoctoral fellowship at

Dalhousie University's Health Informatics Program. This experience sparked my desire to change careers, and I have been working in the research field ever since. I began my career at the IWK as a clinical trials coordinator and have since advanced professionally.

The aspect of my work that makes me most proud:

I am proud to help develop, implement, and evaluate e-Mental Health solutions that will help close the gap in psychological treatment worldwide. In addition, I value the chance to teach and mentor aspiring researchers and appreciate the opportunity to pass on what I have learned.

Advice to young professionals:

Be resilient. Resilience is a valuable trait that can contribute significantly to a person's research skills. In the research field, setbacks and failures are a common part of the process, but how you respond to them is what distinguishes successful researchers. Your resilience enables you to face challenges head-on and recover from setbacks. You can overcome obstacles and make meaningful contributions to the field of research by approaching challenges with determination,

perseverance, and a growth mindset.

In my off-time, I enjoy:

During my free time, I like to do activities that give my life a healthy balance and help me recharge and clear my mind. As a dietitian, cooking is one of my favourite ways to unwind. I enjoy experimenting with different recipes and ingredients and creating delicious meals for my family and friends. Another passion of mine is playing the piano. I played as a child and recently got a free piano, which has reignited my love for music. I find playing the piano to be a soothing and cathartic experience, and it's a great way to express my creativity. Lastly, playing chess with my family has been a wonderful way to spend time together. It's a fun and stimulating activity that requires strategy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (all of which are used in research!).

My hidden talent is:

I write children's books! I have a hidden talent for writing, which I discovered after the birth of my son. He was born with a genetic disorder, and writing was a powerful coping strategy. As a result of channelling my emotions into storytelling, I started writing about atypical motherhood on social media, and

I have published two children's books in Brazil. My son's story inspired my first children's book. It's about a little dinosaur different from his friends and teaches kids about inclusion and the value of diversity. The story struck a chord with readers and has provided support and empowerment to many families. My second book, about cats and how humans can learn mindfulness by observing their habits, was published last year. The book is a fun and educational read for kids that teaches them about mindfulness and self-awareness. I am proud of my hidden talent and its impact on others. Writing has

provided me with a platform to share my stories and connect with others, and I am thankful for the chance to make a difference in the world through my writing. You can learn more about my writing on my Instagram profile @sou_raqueldias.

Humanities Corner

Psychiatry Book Club

You're invited to join us for the Psychiatry Department's Medical Humanities Book Club!

We will be discussing Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's novel *Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies*.

When: Tuesday, March 21 from 6-7 p.m.

Where: Zoom

Faculty, residents, students & staff are invited to attend. Participation details including the Zoom link have been circulated via email and are also available on the department's database.

Please contact Kelly Hancock (kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca) with any questions or to RSVP.

Medical Humanities



Student Writing Competition 2023

Do you enjoy writing?

Medical students and residents are invited to submit reflective essays, prose, poetry, plays, or graphic novellas exploring the intersection of mental health and the humanities to the **Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry Annual Student Writing Competition**. Other forms of creative writing may also be accepted.

One entry in each category (medical student, postgraduate trainee) will be selected to receive a cash prize.

Contest Rules

Who is eligible? Medical students, residents, and fellows at Canadian medical schools.

Maximum word count: 2,000 words

Deadline: This year's deadline is **May 1, 2023**. Winners will be announced in June 2023.

Entries can be sent as PDF attachments to the Department of Psychiatry Undergraduate Education Coordinator, Kelly Hancock, at kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca. Please indicate in your email whether you are a medical student or a resident/fellow.

To ensure confidentiality is maintained, patients and anyone else described in essays, stories, or poems **must be fictional or composite characters (with the exception of the narrator him/herself).*

For complete contest rules, please visit: <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/education/medical-humanities/writing-competition.html>

Winning

Winning entries will be published in the Department of Psychiatry newsletter, *Headlines*, and on the **Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry website**.

Tel: 902.473.5633 | kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca



HEADLINES **SUBMISSIONS**

Headlines provides 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.

The next issue of **Headlines** will be distributed in **April 2023**.

Please send all submissions to **Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca**



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