

Research Director's Report
Forensic Psychiatry
Kim Good, Ph.D.

Update: Sept 30, 2025

Project and Overview	Principal investigator and team	Update
RedCap data base system for Clinical assessment	Team	Courtneie Berger has been entering retrospective data (<i>Dynamic Appraisal of Situational Aggression</i> DASA) into RedCap. This data is collected (almost) daily on all individuals on the unit. There are two ward clerks who are entering the data prospectively. Courtneie has been transferring the data from the Excel spreadsheet to RedCap. Administration has been slow to grant others the ability to be added in order to enter the data.
	PI: Risk Kronfli Co-Is: Garima Mann Dorothy Edam Ruth.Owusu-Antwi	This project involves looking at the implementation of an oversight committee to determine whether there are improvements in movements back and forth between lower security and higher security units. The outcome of this project has wide-reaching implications. First, it removes the conflict of interest out of the hands of the clinician who must balance patient rights with community safety to a decision made by unbiased individuals. Second, it uses objective data to inform on whether a patient should be provided with more or less freedoms. It is the first of its kind in Canada and possibly beyond. Although this is thought to be program evaluation, an REB

		application has begun, and we await whether this is REB exempt.
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Research Director's Report
Community Psychiatry
Dr. David Gardner

Updated: October 2025

Project	Principle investigator(s)	Update
<i>Mental Health Specialist Delivery of Primary Care Services</i> Measure the extent of primacy care activities being conducted by clinicians in adult CMHA clinics.	Dr. Greg MacMullin	Data collection underway at five clinics. Recruitment and scheduling ongoing. 14 participants recruited out of possible 30. 188 encounters captured. Preparing Research Day poster.
<i>Evaluation of the Clinical Effectiveness of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services</i> Assessing psychiatric rehabilitation programming for patients with severe persistent mental illness (SPMI).	Dr. Mahmoud Awara & Dr. Josh Green	Awaiting data release. Meeting with RMU analyst. Preparing Research Day poster.
<i>Complexity Assessment Project</i> Implement a novel complexity assessment tool to identify patients with more complex health care needs and coordinate their care with greater efficiency.	Dr. Anand Natarajan and Donald Edgar	Received feedback from Dartmouth CMHA team on complexity tool. Bayers Road team reviewing tool. Setting up meeting with both sites to determine protocol. Preparing Research Day poster.
<i>Alternatives for Prazosin for Nightmares in PTSD: a case series</i> With a shortage of Prazosin, OSI clinicians have been prescribing Doxazosin as an alternative, and getting similar positive reports from patients. Are interested in detailing this in a case series.	Dr. Sonia Murray (Detillieux)	REB accepted. REDCap created for data collection. Finalizing study procedure with PI.
<i>BPD Clinic Research</i> Updated electronic research database. New project focusing on healthcare utilization before and after treatment at the BPDTP, along with looking at the effect of treatment length.	Dr. Deb Parker & Dr. Marie-Eve Couture	Research database up to date. Determined research project idea with BPD team. Submitted application for DPRF funding.
<i>DoP Wellness Committee Events Paper</i> QA paper on findings of quality surveys given to department members before and after the departmental wellness social event for the past three years.	Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak & Dr. Kara Dempster	Created figures for final survey results. Assisted with citation management, and journal submission.
<i>Violence Risk Assessment</i> To develop and implement a violence risk log tool to use at intake and as needed at Connections Sackville.	Dr. Tanya Pellow, Norma Lewis, Dr. Laura Downing	Applied for QI Collaborative Initiative but were not selected. Developing protocol for quality improvement violence risk log for clinical files.

	& Jennifer Davy	
Other activities		Assisted with poster and study recruitment by sharing with community contacts for the following studies: - Ashley Francis (Dalhousie) – Bipolar disorder EEG study

Research Director's Report
Geriatric Psychiatry Section
Gail A. Eskes, Ph.D.

Update: October 10, 2025

Project and Overview	Principal investigator and team	Update
<i>Integrated video simulation and role play: Exploring a novel faculty development approach to teach assessment and feedback skills.</i> Aim: To assess effectiveness of a novel educational intervention to teach faculty to provide effective feedback in a CBME environment.	PI: Dr. Mark Bosma Others: Dr. Cheryl Murphy, Mandy Esliger	Data collection completed. Presented at ICAM, ICRE, and AAP In process of finalizing manuscript to submit for publication
<i>Study of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Older Adults with Late-Life Depression</i> Aim: RCT to determine the efficacy of an enhanced form of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for older adults with late-life depression as compared to being on the waitlist for treatment Funding: Dept. of Psychiatry Research Fund	PI: Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy Others: Amy Gough, Karen Cochrane, Danielle DeBay, Mark Bosma, Gail Eskes, Marilyn Cipak, Sam Hawkins*, Oswin Fernandes	RA hiring completed, with Oswin Fernandes taking on the role of study-specific RA. Additionally, a clinical psychology student is in the process of being hired as an RA for the purpose of assessing participants' depression while being blind to group status. Study's start date delayed to Winter 2026 due to this hiring process.
<i>Scoping Review of Hidden Curriculum in Medical Education</i> Aim: To review the hidden curriculum (ageism, stereotypes, discrimination, etc.) in caring for older adults that medical trainees may be exposed to at any level of training	PIs: Drs. Kathleen Singh, Mark Bosma, Cheryl Murphy Others: Mae-Lin de Lange, Rachel Lewis, Sam Hawkins*	Full text screening is ongoing, and nearly complete.
<i>Preliminary Literature Review on Teaching Geriatric Psychiatry Modules to General Psychiatry Residents</i>	PIs: Drs. Mark Bosma, Cheryl Murphy, Meagan MacNeil	Completing an informal literature search, and potentially beginning the systematic review process

Aim: To understand the methods used across residency programs to deliver geriatric psychiatry content to psychiatry residents during their training		
<i>Literature Review on Positive Psychosocial Characteristics in a Canadian Context</i> Aim: To review published empirical studies of well-being in the Canadian culture.	PI: Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy Others: Dr. Amy Gough, Sam Hawkins	Review has been solicited by journal <i>Academic Mental Health and Well-Being</i> for a special issue on cross-cultural perspectives and wellbeing. Special issue will be published in the latter half of 2026. An initial search strategy for the review has been drafted.

*Sam Hawkins has been hired as the Geriatric Psychiatry Section Research Assistant.

Others for next update: As well, Cheryl is working on a project with Dr. Michelle MacDonald re teacher identity – she is away right now, but this would be worth including in the next update.

Research Director's Report
Acute, Emergency and Consultation Liaison Psychiatry
Dr. Candice Crocker, PhD

Update: October 10, 2025

Project	Principle investigator(s)	Update	Team members
<i>Examining Attitudes Towards Injectable Psychiatric Medications in Women Undergoing Acute Mental Healthcare.</i> This mixed-methods study explores how cultural influences shape women's attitudes toward long-acting injectable (LAI) antipsychotic medications. By surveying and interviewing a diverse sample, with a focus on Black Canadian and African Nova Scotian women, the research aims to inform culturally competent healthcare practices for LAI medication acceptance.	Dr. Mutiat Sulyman	Recruitment is ongoing. 8 Participants have completed the study. The DPRF grant billing account is set up, and patient compensation is active.	Dr. Mutiat Sulyman (Faculty) Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Dr. Matthew Knox (Faculty) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant) Dr. Jennifer Emesih (Resident)
<i>Impact on Length of Stay and Symptomatic Recovery of Seclusion Versus Chemical Restraint in an Inpatient Acute Care Unit.</i> This study evaluates the use of coercive methods like seclusion and chemical restraint in psychiatric care within Central Zone, Nova Scotia Health. By analyzing patient outcomes, hospital stay duration, and policy impacts through chart reviews and interviews, the research aims to inform policy improvements and promote compassionate mental healthcare.	Dr. Sanjana Sridharan	REB revisions were completed and resubmitted to REB for approval.	Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Dr. Mutiat Sulyman (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Dr. Matthew Knox (Faculty) Dr. Joseph Saunders (Resident) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant) Ashwini More (Med Student Y-4) Dr. Niamh Campbell (Resident) Dr. Julia Leblanc (Resident)



<i>Day Hospital Service Delivery – Is a Multi-Level Approach to Care Effective in Preventing Re-admission and Improving Engagement to Continuing Mental Health Care?</i> This quality assurance project evaluated the acute care day hospital program at NSH, launched April 1, 2022. It compared patient outcomes, satisfaction, and cost-efficiency against traditional inpatient care using psychiatric assessments and pre- and post-intervention data. The goal was to measure impact, support program development, and guide its integration into the healthcare system.	Dr. Anthony Pianosi	Data extraction/statistical analysis done by Muhammad. Internal report submitted and is under internal review. The entire Day Hospital team contributed to its development.	Dr. Anthony Pianosi (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Dr. Christiane Whitehouse (Faculty) Muhammad Naqvi (Former Research assistant)
<i>Day Hospital - Clozapine Use</i> Planned study on Clozapine use at the Day Hospital. The team has started multiple patients with strong outcomes and according to CSAN may be among the top prescribers in the region. This likely prevented hundreds of inpatient admission days, highlighting a major impact worth further analysis.	Dr. Anthony Pianosi	DPRF Category C grant application submitted Oct 7th. The project will be submitted to REB for ethics approval (Nicole is working on REB application).	Dr. Anthony Pianosi (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty-Research Mentor) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant)
<i>Possible Sex and Gender Biases in Admissions to Acute Inpatient Psychiatric Care</i> Clinicians observed low female admission rates at the Abbie J. Lane Memorial Building, raising concerns about access to care. This QI project reviewed psychiatric admission data by sex and gender identity from June 2023 to June 2024. The goal was to identify disparities and guide	Drs. Candice Crocker and Sanjana Sridharan	QI Data was received. Planned presentation of data and findings to quality summit (Spring 2026). Rapid review revisions suggest converting project to a systematic review and expanding search terms. 2 students are performing revisions for this conversion to a systematic review.	Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Lilith Nosko (Grad Student, Psychiatry) Ella Hodgeson-Pageau (Undergraduate, Independent study)

changes to improve equity in access to psychiatric services.			
<i>Where Did the Women Go? Gender Disparities Across Mental Health Crisis Pathways in Nova Scotia</i> This study investigates gender disparities in access to acute psychiatric care at Nova Scotia Health. Despite higher overall mental illness rates in women, internal data show men are admitted far more often. The study will examine three crisis response entry points—Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES), Mental Health Mobile Crisis Teams (MHMCT), and Emergency Health Services (EHS)—to identify where disparities occur. It will test whether clinical decisions, risk perceptions, and service use differ by gender, potentially influencing admission rates. Findings aim to inform equitable access to inpatient psychiatric care.	Drs. Candice Crocker and Sanjana Sridharan	This arises from the project above. Nicole assisting Dr. Candice Crocker and Dr. Sridharan with the REB study design and REB project proposal submission.	Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant) Ella Hodgeson-Pageau (Undergraduate)
<i>Effectiveness of Psychiatric House Calls in Reducing Repeat Emergency Visits: A Rapid Evidence Synthesis</i> A systematic review to synthesize evidence on psychiatric house calls, based on a case from NSH where a home visit reduced repeat psychiatric emergency visits. The review will assess the effectiveness of house calls in lowering repeat hospital use for psychiatric care.	Dr. Sanjana Sridharan	Rapid review is in the process of transforming into a systematic review. Protocol has been submitted to Prospero. Nicole is screening (2nd reviewer) titles and abstracts (~1724).	Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Muhammad Naqvi (Research Assistant) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant)

<i>Assessing the Applicability of the SMART Medical Checklist in the Assessment of Psychiatric Patients in the Emergency Department: A Retrospective Cohort Chart Review</i> This retrospective cohort chart review examines the impact of the SMART medical clearance checklist on psychiatric emergency department assessments. By analyzing 1000–1500 patient charts from 2023, the study aims to determine whether the tool could reduce medical workups and emergency wait times, with findings potentially informing procedural improvements.	Drs. Shiloh Gossen and Michelle MacDonald	REB approved on January 8, 2025. The study is in progress. Muhammad is supporting residents with data extraction methods. Dr. Emma Hazelton is completing a residency research project with this work. Project is currently ongoing.	Dr. Shiloh Gossen (Faculty) Dr. Michelle Macdonald (Faculty) Dr. Emma Hazelton (Resident) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Muhammad Naqvi (Research assistant) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant)
<i>Investigation of Outcomes after Thoracic Surgery for Malignancy in Patients with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI)</i> This study compared lung cancer surgery outcomes between patients with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI) and those without. Using matched data from Nova Scotia health databases (2013–2018), results showed no difference in one-year survival, length of stay, or readmissions. However, SPMI patients had lower two-year survival and a trend toward more major postoperative complications. Larger studies are needed to confirm these findings.	Dr. Shiloh Gossen	Shiloh Gossen is finalizing a manuscript based on her residency project and remains actively involved in the collaboration. Manuscript has been rejected and resubmitted to Journal of Cardiothoracic Surgery.	Dr. Shiloh Gossen (Faculty) Dr. Phil Tibbo (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Dr. Jonathan Bailey (Faculty) Dr. Daniel French (Faculty) Maria Simmons (Research Assistant) Muhammad Naqvi (Research Assistant)
<i>Race and Ethnicity as Moderators to Likelihood of Psychiatric Admission From ED</i> The study aims to examine the ethnic demographics of patients formed under the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act in the	Dr. Shiloh Gossen <u>or</u> Dr. Michelle Macdonald	Working with Qendresa Sahiti and Renaj Forbes. Last discussed in January. The study is currently in the design phase.	Dr. Shiloh Gossen <u>or</u> Dr. Michelle Macdonald (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Dr. Qendresa Sahiti (Resident) Renaj Forbes (Medical Student) Muhammad Naqvi (Research Assistant)

emergency department. The goal is to assess whether BIPOC patients are disproportionately represented among those who are formed.			
Environmental scan of the use of medical clearance checklists in Emergency Departments in Canada	Drs. Louise Moody and Michelle MacDonald	Survey under development.	Dr Louise Moody (Resident) Dr. Michelle MacDonald (Faculty)
<i>Attitudes, Beliefs, and Practices of Healthcare Providers Regarding Birth Plans and Mental Health, and Healthcare Providers' Perceptions of the Correlation Between the Two.</i> This cross-sectional study surveys healthcare providers in Saudi Arabia and Canada on their attitudes and practices related to birth plans and maternal mental health. It aims to assess provider perspectives, mental health competency, and alignment with patient needs to improve childbirth care.	Dr. Awateif Alsupiany	Muhammad and Dr. Candice Crocker supported the study design and REB submission. IWK REB approval was granted on January 29, 2025. The study is ongoing.	Dr. Awateif Alsupiany (Fellow) Dr. Nicole Herschenhou (Faculty) Dr. Tanya Tulipan (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Muhammad Naqvi (Research Assistant) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant)
<i>The Relationship Between Age Related Macular Degeneration and Suicidality</i> This study investigates the link between age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and emergency department visits for suicidal ideation. Vision impairment from AMD may increase the risk of mood disorders and suicidal behavior, yet this connection remains under-researched. The study aims to identify the proportion of Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) assessments involving patients with AMD and explore correlations to guide early screening and targeted mental health interventions.	Currently Dr. Sanjana Sridharan. Cross disciplinary and a doctor from the ophthalmology team at NSH is being recruited to this project by Yousef.	Working with Yousef Sefau. Muhammad Naqvi (now medical student at UPEI) and Dr. Candice Crocker are supporting the REB study design.	Yousef Sefau (Medical student) Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Muhammad Naqvi (Research assistant)

Impact of Anxiety and Depression Screening-Treatment in RASP on Patient Resource Demand This study investigates the impact of anxiety and depression screening currently being done in the RASP clinic. The study aims to examine anxiety and depression screening and its ability to provide information for resource demand.	Dr. Archana Unnikrishnan	Working with Dr. Unnikrishnan. Dr. Crocker and Nicole are supporting the study design and determining the fit of this project for the program. Dr. Unnikrishnan is consulting with Dr. Ezeanozie to ensure that no other projects are assessing the factors proposed for study.	Dr. Archana Unnikrishnan (Faculty) Dr. Ngozi Ezeanozie (Faculty) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant)
Multiple Sclerosis Case Report a patient who initially presented with psychiatric symptoms and was later found to have active multiple sclerosis, which appears to be the underlying cause.	Dr. Sanjana Sridharan	Working with Ramez Michail. Case Report is in preparation. Draft is currently being reviewed by Dr. Candice Crocker. The research assistant was the touch point for how to consult for informed consent, storage of consent forms etc.	Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Ramez Michail (Medical student) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Nicole Ponto (Research assistant)
Psychosis Case Report A patient presented with abnormal language components in psychosis.	Dr. Sanjana Sridharan	Informed consent obtained, and case report paper is currently in preparation. Dr. Crocker and Nicole are supporting the case report.	Dr. Sanjana Sridharan (Faculty) Mitch Baker (PA Student) Dr. Elycia Monaghan (Resident PGY1) Dr. Candice Crocker (Faculty) Nicole Ponto (Research Assistant)
Section journal club Newly conveyed avenue to convey research findings from within and outside of the section relevant to those who practice in our section.	Dr. Candice Crocker	Inaugural journal club was held in September. First subsection to present was Neuropsychiatry. 13 section members attended a presentation from Dr. Erik Fraunberger (31 invited). Next Journal Club scheduled to meet November 25th.	All section members. Section RA (Nicole Ponto) assists with room booking, email notices etc.

Research Director's Report
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Dr. Jill Chorney

Update: September 2025

Project	Principle investigator(s)	Update
Projects supported by RA:		
<i>Examining the qualitative experiences of youth and families in the transition from the IWK Youth Psychosis Clinic to the adult Nova Scotia Early Psychosis Program</i> Examine the experiences had by those involved in the transition from youth to adult psychosis care clinics	Dr. Sabina Abidi	Since last update, REB renewal has been approved along with with updated interview guide. Recruitment efforts are on-going with some difficulty. Communications underway regarding potential involvement / support of medical resident.
<i>Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: Engagement, Burnout and Moral Distress</i> Assess contributors of moral distress and burnout among Child and Adolescent psychiatrists as to facilitate a solution-focused approach to supporting faculty	Drs. Jill Chorney, Sabina Abidi and Alexa Bagnell	Interview guide completed; interviews with faculty members are underway with 6 completed and 2 more scheduled. Thematic analysis to begin in October with themes expected to be available by end of the month.
<i>Teaching Child and Adolescent Emergency Psychiatry Through a Child Crises Rounds Model</i> Evaluate Child Crisis rounds as a teaching intervention for delivery of emergency psychiatry teaching in a psychiatry residency training program	Dr. Kate Stymiest	RA reviewed and edited manuscript, as well as made suggestions for revising reporting of results. Manuscript to be prioritized by Dr. Stymiest when capacity allows for it.
<i>IWK Psychiatry Peer Observation and Feedback Pilot</i> Assess feasibility and acceptability of a peer observation and feedback program with psychiatrists in clinical practice	Dr. Chelcie Soroka	Recruitment has stalled; project currently on-hold.
<i>Applying Family Based Treatment into Practice: A Capacity Building Model</i> Demonstrate how to use a capacity building model to increase the use of evidence-based treatment in the management of eating disorders	Eating Disorders Specific Care Clinic (EDSCC) Team	RA is supporting the publication submission of a capacity building project previously done by the EDSCC team; RA is assisting with configuring the project details into a research article format.

<i>International Review of Pediatric Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders (SSRD) Treatment in Practice</i> Collect and synthesize detailed information regarding individual SSRD treatment programs in 4 different countries (e.g., service structure) as to construct a roadmap for the establishment of new pediatric SSRD specialty services.	Drs. Selene Etches and Kyle Godden	RA provided suggestions for possible tables and figures to condense manuscript to be more inline with target journal requirements. RA created potential graphics to include in manuscript. Information from study will be presented at Psychiatry Research Day 2025.
<i>Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome and Pediatric Auto-immune Neuropsychiatric Syndrome Associated with Strep (PANS&PANDAS): A retrospective chart review</i> Gather data on severe PANS and PANDAS cases requiring acute inpatient care to better elucidate how child and youth in the Maritime provinces are presenting in terms of symptoms and response to treatment	Drs. Sarah Fancy and Laura Miller	REB Approval has been granted, and the project is currently in data extraction phase.
<i>Cannabis Potency and Harm to Developing Brains</i> Examine current literature and available data to discern extent of problem and create materials for advocacy	Drs. Sabina Abidi, Selene Etches and Sarah Fancy	Project in development stage.
<i>National Implementation of Highly Efficient Evidence-Informed Treatment for Youth with Eating Disorders</i> Evaluate the implementation approach of Guided Self-Help Family-Based Treatment (GSH-FBT) within pediatric treatment sites across 9 provinces.	Drs. Chelcie Soroka and Katie Radchuck (PI: Dr. Jennifer Couture, McMaster)	Investigators consulting with Research and Innovation Advancement team and finalizing REB process, with Dr. Katie Radchuck joining as co-investigator. RA supporting IWK REB submission and local investigator certification processes where required.
<i>Level of Care System Tool in Intensive Services</i> Retrospectively apply care stratification tools (CaLOCUS-CASII and ASAM) in a Canadian tertiary mental health care setting as to examine the relationship between predicted levels of care and client characteristics.	Dr. Charles Kelderhouse	RA supporting the development of project proposal including specific objectives and methods.
<i>Primary Care in Psychiatry Survey</i> Assess child and adolescent psychiatrist's engagement of primary care treatment with patients	Drs. Celia Robichaud and Alexa Bagnell	Project group met end of September to discuss next steps. Seminar series will be held followed by evaluation. RA to be pulled in for support in November.

<i>Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Faculty Research Project Tracking</i> Improve and manage process for tracking research projects involving C&A psychiatry faculty and said project's status	N/A	Reviewing alternative tracking and reporting processes with quality improvement team.
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