



Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis Newsletter: May 2014

IMHA - *On the Move!*

A Message from the Scientific Director



May is the month Canadians have been waiting for all winter! With the snow gone, it's time to get out and get moving.

National Physiotherapy Month

As it happens, May is both [National Physiotherapy Month](#), and [Foot Health Awareness Month](#). These awareness markers and other commemorative weeks and days taking place this month remind us

that taking care of our bodies' joints, bones, muscles, tendons and every part that makes us move, is very important for maintaining overall good health. Physiotherapy research, which IMHA supports, is essential for improving ways to help people with mobility challenges achieve better health and quality of life. [Spinal Health Week](#) was May 1 to 7, and [North American Occupational Safety and Health Week](#) fell May 4 to 10. [World Lupus Day](#) and [WHO Move for Health Day](#) both happened on May 10, and [Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome National Awareness Day](#) was May 12. [Active Healthy Kids Canada](#), a not-for-profit organization working to get kids active hosted a Global Summit in Toronto, May 19 to 22.

Injury Prevention

IMHA IAB member Dr. Stephen Robinovitch is a keynote speaker at the – sold out, no less – National Fall Prevention conference May 27 – 28 in Toronto, co-hosted by the Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre and the BC Injury research and prevention unit. A professor at Simon Fraser University with research interests including rehabilitative engineering and neurophysiology, Steve will speak on Injury Prevention and Mobile Laboratory Technology for injury prevention in seniors. [Here is a link](#) to one of Steve's videos about his research.

Strategic Plan and Signature Initiatives

IMHA's Strategic Planning Process is in full swing and we look forward to unveiling the new plan this fall. As well, IMHA is becoming increasingly involved in supporting several exciting

initiatives currently in development including the CIHR's Inflammation in Chronic Disease Signature Initiative and the Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples Signature Initiative.

As always, I encourage you to continue to submit any questions or comments to IMHA@cihr-irsc.gc.ca. Please also follow me on Twitter [@HaniElGabalawy](#).

Sincerely,

Hani El-Gabalawy MD FRCPC
Scientific Director
CIHR Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis

Funding Opportunities and Research News

For information on current funding opportunities, please visit [IMHA's Funding Opportunities](#) online.

Registration to 2014 Foundation Scheme Pilot

Researchers who are [eligible](#) to apply to the 2014 Foundation Scheme 1st Live Pilot may begin registration to this competition through [ResearchNet](#). Registration will stay open until 8 p.m. Eastern time, June 23, 2014. As this is a new funding opportunity, we encourage you to refer to the registration instructions available online.

- * [2014 Foundation Scheme 1st Live Pilot funding opportunity](#)
- * [Complete registration instructions](#)

If you experience any technical difficulties with the registration process, please contact CIHR Support by phone at 1-888-603-4178 or 613-954-1968, or via email at: support@cihr-irsc.gc.ca. If you have any other questions please contact [Roadmap-Plan](#). Strategique@cihr-irsc.gc.ca or visit the CIHR website to learn more about the [CIHR Reforms of Open Programs and peer review](#).



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Canada

May is National Physiotherapy Month...

Promoting physical activity and research regarding its benefits in illness prevention and recovery is a critical and ongoing part of IMHA's mandate. Several of the Institute's Advisory Board members are physiotherapist researchers who have offered some insights on the current state of physiotherapy research in Canada. This month we also feature the IMHA-supported work of a team led by PhD Candidate Kathryn Sinden and Dr. Joy MacDermid to find better ways for firefighters to avoid injury at work.

Physiotherapy Research in Canada

By Drs. Debbie Feldman and Joy MacDermid, [IMHA IAB members](#)

The Current Scene

In Canada and most of the western world, the need for rehabilitation services is increasing as a result of the ageing of the population. Advances in medical care mean that children and adults can survive diseases and injuries that were previously fatal, but often require rehabilitation to regain their function while living with chronic diseases or disabilities. Lack of access and long delays for rehabilitation may result in re-hospitalization, dependence on caregivers, premature placement in long-term care or even death. Persons with acute illnesses are often prioritized and those with chronic conditions experience long delays for care.

Research Needs in Rehabilitation

Physiotherapy helps individuals retain function and remain active in their life roles. Research in this field must address ways 1) to improve access to rehabilitation services and 2) to enhance quality of rehabilitation services, for persons with chronic conditions and disability.

Physiotherapy research that examines new or enhanced methods for treating musculoskeletal (MSK) disorders is extremely important. MSK disorders are a leading cause of work-related physical disability accounting for 40 % of workers compensation costs and are the second most costly group of diseases in Canada. There is strong research evidence to show that persons with MSK problems (e.g. different forms of arthritis, back, neck and joint pain, fibromyalgia, etc.) benefit from appropriate physiotherapy interventions.

Physiotherapy Research Today

Physiotherapy research is allowing us to develop and test new approaches to decrease pain, improve function, enhance activity participation and maintain quality of life. For example, physiotherapist researchers have tested ways to identify people at risk of falls and to prevent future falls, an important area given that falls can often lead to institutionalization and a loss of independence in older adults.

Recent research has made advances in enhancing muscle function by targeting specific types of exercise or stimulation of nerves and muscles. Some studies by muscle and physiotherapy researchers show potential to benefit persons with paralysis while others target ways to combat loss of muscle that often occurs with ageing and in persons with chronic diseases such as cancer and arthritis. Physiotherapists also work with very acute patients and are currently testing ways of keeping people active and moving in the hospital during critical care to improve outcomes and promote recovery. Researchers are also developing novel rehabilitation methods for athletes to enable safe and timely return to their sport.

Moving Forward – Physiotherapy in Practice

Physiotherapists are primary care practitioners, whom patients can see without a referral from a doctor, although many doctors do still advise patients with pain or mobility problems that they need physiotherapy. Physiotherapists are evolving their practice through additional training and in several provinces are diagnosing patients with MSK problems (ordering and interpreting tests and x-rays), providing appropriate treatment including medications and referring those with more complex needs to orthopedists or rheumatologists. Research on the expansion of practice in physiotherapists is essential to determine the safety and benefits of physiotherapists in these enhanced roles.

Partner Corner



Staying active with arthritis in the digital age

Dr. Linda Li of the Arthritis Research Centre of Canada is leading a study called [Arthritis Care in the Digital Age](#) to learn about how patients may effectively use physical activity trackers like Fitbit, Jawbone or Exercise Apps to better manage their arthritis. Researchers will be holding focus groups in British Columbia and Alberta. This study is funded by The Arthritis Society.

To participate or for more information, please contact Jenny Leese, Research Assistant by phone: 604-207-4006 or Toll-Free: 1-877-871-4575 or email: jleese@arthritisresearch.ca

Share your news with the IMHA community

Do you have a story that has helped sustain health and enhance quality of life by eradicating the pain, suffering and disability caused by arthritis, musculoskeletal, oral and skin conditions? Are you planning an event that might be of interest to the IMHA community? Is your organization launching a funding opportunity? IMHA would like to celebrate our partners' and stakeholders' success stories, events, and funding opportunities in our monthly newsletter. Please make your submissions to IMHA@cihr-irsc.gc.ca. We look forward to sharing your information with the IMHA community!

Contact Us

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May is National Physiotherapy Month

A Success Story in Physiotherapy Research...

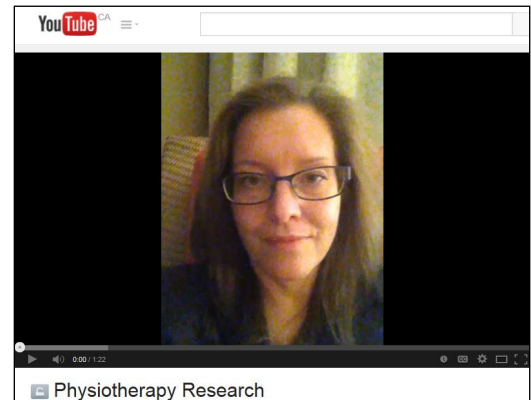
The Evolution of FIRE-WELL: Improving Firefighters' Health through Research and Partnership

This month IMHA would like to shine a spotlight on recent research on physical health supported by CIHR-IMHA. Researchers PhD Candidate Kathryn Sinden and Dr. Joy MacDermid's work on finding ways to prevent musculoskeletal injury on the job for Firefighters was featured in [Celebrating the Impact of Health Research: Success Stories in Arthritis, Bone, Muscle, Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation, Oral Health, and Skin](#).

The research behind Kathryn Sinden and Dr. MacDermid's story, "The Evolution of FIRE-WELL: Improving Firefighters' Health through Research and Partnership" came about because the life-saving work firefighters do is so critical but it comes at a high risk to the health of the firefighters themselves.

The very nature of the firefighting profession means firefighters face a high risk of injury from the compounded effects of cardiovascular, physical and emotional demands of the job. Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) cause about one-third of all firefighter injuries. With limited knowledge about what diagnostic tests may find MSD in firefighters, the researchers developed FIRE-WELL, an evidence-based injury management program. The research team screened 150 firefighters over a six-month period combining both participatory research and knowledge translation (KT), growing a relationship between researchers and firefighters.

Part of the project involved developing a firefighter physical demands analysis (PDA) that was later applicable to helping with return-to-work (RTW) plans after injury. To create the PDA, researchers recorded information about all the equipment used on the job by firefighters including the weight of each item and



Meet the Researcher: Kathryn Sinden introduces the FIRE-WELL project - in person [here](#).

a description of the physical demands of various firefighting duties. In addition to developing RTWs, this information helped workplace occupational health and safety teams to identify injury risks, and influenced injury management decisions.

This work was instrumental in laying a strong foundation to the research partnership that has facilitated development and implementation of the next important phases of research. This next phase will identify evidence-based tools and strategies that firefighters can use to help alleviate factors associated with MSD injury.

Meetings of Interest



CIHR Media Training Webinar

June 26 2:00-3:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis Trainees and Researchers are invited to participate in a Media Training Webinar. This 1.5-hour

media training session, facilitated by CIHR media specialist **David Coulombe**, offers media relations tools and outreach strategies to help communicate more effectively with the media and maximize media outreach. The session is geared towards individuals with minimal media training experience. This session will be provided in English only, however the facilitator will answer questions in both official languages. [Register here](#) for this training session. Once you are approved by the host, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

Session Number: 558 716 180

Registration password:

This session does not require a registration password.

[Click here](#) to view in other time zones or languages.

For assistance, contact **Amanda Devost** at:

amanda.devost@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

Canadian Connective Tissue Conference

June 8-10, 2014 London ON

Canadian Physiotherapy Association National Congress

June 19-22, 2014 Edmonton AB

Sclerodoma Foundation National Patient Education Conference

July 25-27, 2014 Anaheim, FL

Myoelectric Controls Symposium

August 18-22, 2014 Fredericton, NB

American Society for Bone & Mineral Research

September 12-15, 2014 Houston, TX

Scleroderma Society of Canada Conference

September 18-20, 2014 Winnipeg, MB

Cochrane Collaboration Colloquium

September 21-26, 2014 Hyderabad, India

Work Disability International Conference

September 29-October 1, 2014 Toronto, ON