

# Health Notes

November 2014

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## Message from the Chair

### A new name! Welcome to the Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine Section

As Chair of the Health Psychology Section, I am pleased to announce that the members approved a section name change at the Business Meeting at the annual conference last June 2014. We will now be called the “**Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine**” section (formerly the Health Psychology section). The rationale for the name change was primarily motivated by the broader scope of the research and practice activities of many of our members, as well as important advances in the area of Behavioral Medicine applied to primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention of many chronic diseases (e.g., cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and chronic lung disease, HIV, chronic pain). **Health Psychology** has been traditionally defined as the study of psychological and behavioral processes in health, illness, and healthcare. It is primarily concerned with understanding how psychological, behavioral, and socio-cultural factors contribute to physical health and illness, and is thus more of an ‘academic’ or theoretical discipline. In contrast, **Behavioral Medicine** is an evidence-based treatment-oriented discipline, and may be defined as an interdisciplinary field combining both medicine and psychology that is con-

cerned with the integration of knowledge in the biological, behavioral, psychological, and social sciences relevant to health and illness. The practice of behavioral medicine encompasses health psychology, but also includes applied psychophysiological therapies such as mindfulness meditation and relaxation interventions, biofeedback, bio-behavioral therapy (i.e., adapted cognitive-behavioral therapy, CBT), motivational counselling, as well as rehabilitation and preventive interventions. We hope you are happy with the name change, and that it will encourage new and existing members to join our section and enjoy the exciting program we are planning for the annual meeting in Ottawa (June 3-6)! We welcome abstract and symposium submissions in all areas related to health including chronic disease (cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, lung disease, HIV, hepatitis C), alcohol and substance abuse, pain, sexual health, maternal, infant and child health, psychosomatic disorders (e.g., hypochondriasis, conversion disorder), healthy aging, acute and chronic stress, health behaviors, psychophysiology, and behavioral medicine interventions (e.g., cognitive-behavioral, mindfulness meditation, motivational counselling/communication) for both primary and secondary prevention of chronic disease or health promotion.

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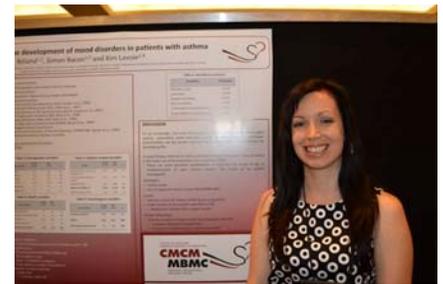
## Highlights from the 75th Meeting of the CPA

By MÉLANIE BÉLAND, MSc, PhD Candidate (Montreal)

The annual CPA convention was held last summer in Vancouver from June 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> 2014. Topics were greatly diverse, with subjects ranging from pediatric psycho-oncology and chronic pain to art therapy for individuals with chronic illnesses. There were over a dozen posters along with some very interesting oral

presentations. Highly appreciated was a symposium jointly given by our section and the Sport and Exercise Psychology Section, on some overlapping themes of the two research fields. This year's Health Section keynote presentation, entitled "Motivating your patients for change: why consider training in motivational communication (MC) and what it can do for you", was presented by Michael Vallis and the current section

chair, Kim L. Lavoie. The two of them presented on MC's applications and efficacy for lifestyle change, as well as improving actual patient health outcomes among patients with chronic conditions. This presentation nicely complemented the CPA keynote presentation entitled "Changing Behaviour: Models and Methods" by Susan Michie. We thank everyone who attended for sharing their research and ideas.



## Thanks to our Keynote speaker, Dr Michael Vallis

We were pleased to welcome Dr. Michael Vallis, PhD (Associate Professor, Family Medicine and Psychiatry, Dalhousie University & Psychologist, Lead Behavior Change Institute) as our keynote speaker. He reminded us of the overwhelming health burden of chronic disease (CVD, diabetes, chronic lung disease, cancer), whose underlying causes are a specific cluster of poor health behaviors (smoking, drinking, poor diet, physical activity). He

reported that living a healthy lifestyle including not smoking, low to moderate drinking, eating a healthy diet, and engaging in regular physical activity leads to significant reductions in disease risk (93% for diabetes, 81% for heart attacks, 50% for strokes, and 36% for cancer). Dr. Vallis also reported that only 9% of individuals engage in all four health behaviors, and called for a national strategy to support health behavior change across Canada. He recommend-

ed increased integration of health psychologists with relevant behavior change expertise to train, support and supervise the implementation of programs and interventions by first line providers (e.g., GP's, nurses) to increase the reach and effectiveness of these strategies. Much work is needed to ensure the implementation and oversight of these recommendations, as well as assessments of their cost-effectiveness.

## 2015 Conference Highlights

By **KIM LAVOIE, PhD**  
(Montreal)

On behalf of the Section Executive, I would like to inform members of several exciting initiatives the section is planning for the upcoming meeting in Ottawa, June 3-7!

**Pre-conference Workshops:** We are planning two exciting pre-conference workshops on June 3<sup>rd</sup> focusing on interventions that promote evidence-based health behavior change strategies. One will be a hands-on skill building workshop in advanced Motivational Communication skills [*“Advanced workshop on motivational communication skills for health behavior change”*] and the other will introduce the Canadian Network for Health Behavior Change and

Promotion, and highlight various challenges and opportunities for health psychologists across Canada [*“Canadian Network for Health Behavior Change and Promotion: Challenges and Opportunities”*]. The workshops will be held consecutively and will be led by an outstanding panel of international leaders in the field (Mike Vallis, Kim Lavoie, Tavis Campbell, Kim Corace, Catherine Laurin, and Tavis Campbell). Spaces are limited so sign up soon! Lunch and refreshments will be served.

**Senior Investigator Award Lecture:** We will honor a senior investigator who has made a significant contribution to health psychology and behavioral medicine research during this awards lecture, which will be followed by our annual wine

and cheese reception.

**Annual Wine and Cheese Reception:** Please join us for our annual wine and cheese reception to meet your section executive and network with section members. Award winners will be celebrated during the reception.

**Ron Melzack Student Awards Symposium:** The top rated student abstracts will be nominated to receive the Ron Melzack award, and nominees will be invited to present at the Melzack student symposia session. The winner will receive a cash award, which will be announced at the annual business meeting.

**Student Poster Awards:** The top student posters will also receive cash awards, which will be announced at the annual business meeting.



## Upcoming Events in Other Health-Related Societies

By **LUCIE GOUVEIA, BSc, PhD**  
Candidate  
(Montreal)

The **American Psychosomatic Society** will be holding its 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting in Savannah, Georgia on March 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015. The event, entitled ‘From Cells to Community and Back’ will take place at the Hyatt Regency. More information is available at <http://www.psychosomatic.org/AnMeeting/2015AnnualMeeting.cfm>.

The **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Eastern Canada Sport and Exercise Psychology Symposium** will be held on March 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> 2015, at the University of Ottawa. Stay tuned for more information at <http://www.ecseps.com/>.

The **Society of Behavioural Medicine's** 36<sup>th</sup> annual meeting and scientific sessions will be taking place this upcoming year in San Antonio, Texas, from April 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> 2015. “Advancing the National Prevention Strategy Through Behavioral Medicine Innovation”

will be theme of the conference. For registration, please visit <http://www.sbm.org/meetings/2015>.

The “**International iCEPS Conference**” that focuses on the efficacy and effectiveness of non-pharmacological behavioral medicine trials. The meeting will be held on March 19-21 2015 in Montpellier, France. Please visit <http://www.iceps.fr/conference2015/> to register or for more information.

# Interventions in Health Psychology

## *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment for Menopausal Symptoms*

By **SHERYL M. GREEN, PhD,**  
**CPsych (Hamilton)**

In Canada the average age of a woman entering into the menopausal transition is 51, with the physiologic hallmark of the transition being gradual estrogen depletion. Unlike a disorder or disease, menopause is a natural transition that all women go through in their lives. Nevertheless, the menopausal transition is frequently accompanied by adverse physical (e.g., vasomotor symptoms, sleep difficulties, urogenital complaints and sexual concerns) and mental health difficulties (e.g., depression, anxiety), that can significantly impact a woman's functioning and overall quality of life. In fact, it is estimated that roughly 75-85% of women will experience some if not all these symptoms, which can begin as early as a year prior to the cessation of menses, also known as perimenopause, through into postmenopause. Although Hormone Therapy (HT) has been the most commonly used treatment for relief of menopausal symptoms to date, studies suggest a number of significant risks associated with its long-term use, including heightened incidence of cardiovascular events and breast cancer, for some. As a result, physicians and their patients are often seeking non-hormonal forms of treatment. Alternative treatments such as antidepressants and herbal supplements have received some empirical support for relief of menopausal symptoms. However, these treatments also have

limited acceptability and may lead to adverse side effects. Overall, comprehensive, evidence-based, non-pharmacological treatment strategies for menopausal are lacking. This oversight is of particular concern considering the mounting number of women going through the menopausal transition (2005 Canadian census revealed the total number of women over the age of 50 was greater than 5.5 million) and the challenges regarding acceptability associated with treatments currently available. Our team developed an alternative non-hormonal, non-pharmacological treatment option in the form of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) for menopausal symptoms and recently published a self-help treatment manual (Green, McCabe, Soares, 2012; New Harbinger Publications). Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a structured short-term, skill focused, psychological therapy that has strong empirical support for many mental health (e.g., depression, anxiety) and health (e.g., chronic pain, respiratory) conditions. Our self-help treatment manual addresses multiple difficulties including vasomotor symptoms, depression, anxiety, sleep disruption, urogenital complaints and sexual concerns. Initial pilot data support this comprehensive treatment, offered in the form of a 10-session CBT group (Green, Haber, McCabe, Soares, 2013), with significant reductions in both physical (e.g., vasomotor) and mental health (e.g.,

depression, anxiety) symptoms along with an increase in quality of life. Further, we found high acceptability and satisfaction for this intervention based on a client satisfaction questionnaire administered post treatment as well as an exit interview. Our next step is to conduct a large randomized controlled trial evaluating this form of treatment with our treatment team members: Dr. Brenda Key, Dr. Benicio Frey, Dr. Donna Fedorkow and Dr. Randi McCabe within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences McMaster University and St. Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton, ON. As consumer demand increases for alternative treatments for menopausal symptoms, this form of treatment may not only be preferred by some, but necessary for others as HT is not an option for many women given the risks associated with it. Ultimately, this treatment program has the potential to positively impact a significant proportion of the population, as the total number of Canadian women over the age of 50 is estimated to reach 7.9 million by the year 2026 (comprising 22% of the Canadian population).



## Students in Health Psychology

By DENISE MA, MSc, PhD  
Candidate (Montreal)

This past June at the Canadian Psychological Association's annual conference, I had the privilege of presenting a student poster for the Health Psychology section. In my poster presentation, I shared findings on the progression of anxiety and diurnal cortisol secretions from childhood through adolescence. The experience of anxiety symptoms in young children is extremely stressful. Chronic stress is associated with dysregulations in the underlying neuroendocrine system, predominantly the HPA axis. To date, we do not know how the stress associated with cognitive-emotional symptoms like anxiety in children could affect the underlying HPA-axis and diurnal cortisol secretion. With the goal of addressing this question, we found that children and adolescents with

high physiological symptoms of anxiety had overall blunting of the diurnal curve typically associated with cortisol variation. Over the course of approximately three years, we found that children's worries and social concerns also predicted significant blunting of the diurnal rhythm pattern compared to healthy individuals. The sample is a unique longitudinal risk sample as part of the ongoing Concordia Longitudinal Risk Project. The relation between children's anxiety symptoms and the underlying endocrine system, specifically HPA axis functioning, is an important question to explore given that anxiety symptoms are quite prevalent in childhood and research has also shown that anxiety tends to precede and lead to other more serious mental health problems persisting through to adulthood including depression and anxiety disorders.

It was my first time presenting in the Health Psychology section and it was a humbling experience to see so much interesting research going on right now in our field. The wealth of research showcased during this session displayed the wide range of diverse and interdisciplinary topics being studied within the field of health psychology. The variety of research and methodology truly captured the biopsychosocial model of understanding behaviour and its interactions with the human body and biological systems. It was truly an engaging learning experience for me to connect with and talk to fellow presenters and researchers with similar interests. I am very much looking forward to next year's convention.

## Ron Melzack Student Award Winners 2014

By SERGE SULTAN, PhD  
(Montreal)

I have the great pleasure to announce that the 2014 Ronald Melzack student awards were attributed to **Janine Olthuis** from *Dalhousie University* (oral communication) and **Martin Lamothe** from *Université de Montréal* (poster session).

Janine Olthuis was finishing her doctoral studies in clinical psychology when she presented in Vancouver. She was supervised jointly by Drs. Sherry Stewart and Margo Watt. Her dissertation research has focused on

increasing access to interventions for individuals seeking psychosocial care for health (e.g., pain-related anxiety, substance use) and mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression) problems. One original approach she has used is transdiagnostic interventions. This approach helps individuals gain easier access to treatment for a primary condition and its comorbidities. At CPA she presented a clinical trial that tested the efficacy of a treatment for anxiety sensitivity (the fear of anxiety sensations), with implications for pain-related anxiety, anxiety disorders, depression, and substance

use problem outcomes. A second innovative aspect of her work is the incorporation of technology into intervention delivery. She investigated the efficacy of using the telephone and Internet to extend psychosocial interventions to those who have difficult access to treatment centres. She has just started to work with Dr. Patrick McGrath, at the IWK Health Centre. Her projects will look at online interventions for adolescent substance use prevention and incorporating physical exercise into behavioural activation for adolescent depression.

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Janine's ultimate goal is to better integrate these interventions into our health care system to increase children's, adolescents', and families' access to evidence-based care.

Martin Lamothe has just entered the PhD program at Université de Montréal under the supervision of Dr. Serge Sultan. The program uniquely combines coursework, clinical research, and professional practice. The objective of Martin's research is to evaluate the effects of a mindfulness-based intervention with pediatric oncology healthcare providers on empa-

thy and emotional competencies as well as more traditional outcomes like sleep and mood. His project addresses an important gap in the literature on the mechanisms underlying MBSR interventions. To date, no studies have directly measured emotion identification or emotion acceptance in this context, although we know that these emotional skills are central to professional caregivers. Moreover, these aspects are strongly involved in burnout development. In Vancouver, Martin presented an updated systematic review of the literature demonstrating these gaps. Mar-

tin wishes to develop his career in health psychology using mindfulness approaches to promote emotional and physical well-being. More specifically, his goal is to focus on prevention research and develop innovative interventions that will promote healthier lifestyles and healthy emotion regulation strategies.

Kudos to both of the 2014 recipients! We encourage students at all academic levels to enter the Ron Melzack award competition in 2015 when submitting an abstract to the health section for the upcoming meeting in Ottawa.

## Book Review

### *Innovation: e-Book for Hypnosis in Cancer and Palliative care*

By LEORA KUTTNER, PhD  
(Vancouver)

"Hypnotic Approaches in Cancer and Palliative Care" by Drs. Neron and Handel is an exciting innovation in e-book self-directed learning. It is a well-organized, accessible learning experience in the various ways hypnosis can effectively ameliorate suffering.

Through the innovative use of multi-media, this e-Book gives us a first-hand experience of master clinician and co-author, Dr. Sylvain Neron working compassionately and skillfully with his patients, always providing warmth and hope. Neron & Handel's videos link directly to Youtube via private settings, accessible only through the book. The format is easy, novel and enjoyable.

Video clips demonstrate the range of hypnotic applications

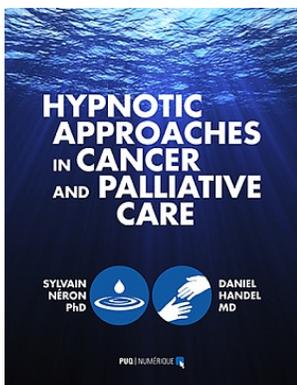
for pain relief and palliation of symptoms; emotional containment and spiritual enrichment; and self-hypnosis for treatments and procedures. Hypnotic techniques include: inductions, amnesia and time distortion, blanket and hand-analgesia.

*"This e-book is a prototype for future professional training"*

The reader can also access a selection of authors' commentary in audio, audio-visual or verbatim scripts to add depth and dimension to this emotionally charged and complex therapeutic material. With clinical sensitivity we are shown how to engage with the threat to life, painful medical procedures, existential questions and suffering. The design of the book is

spacious with minimal lines and succinct graphics summarizing the flow of material. I would have liked to have this book early in my career!

Like the experience of good hypnosis, the book's organization is non-linear, weaving themes, metaphors and suggestions into a wider frame, so that at the end of the seven chapters the reader-learner has a deeper appreciation of what is required to deliver state-of-the-art hypnosis for palliative care. Dr. Neron's method involves drawing from the patient's life, providing care at the bedside teaching self-hypnosis analgesia techniques for fearful procedures, and addressing grief and soul anguish (e.g. by creating a hypnotic experience with the future embedded with comfort, "And the future is NOW. And the future is just COMFORT." (Also see the sailboat metaphor below).



“Metaphors encourage safe distancing from sensory-present reality and include a purposeful reinterpretation of present reality.” The purposeful use of language and development of hypnotic metaphor is demonstrated with a graceful example to ease existential uncertainty at end of life, “A sailboat gliding to the

infinite...always going forward, leaving discomfort behind . . . It is so light that the sea feels its presence . . . safely gliding up to the horizon . . .” This e-book is a prototype for future professional e-training. It provides relevant hypnotic strategies, demonstrates these for pain management, for ease of exis-

tential and soul anguish, and self-management of medical procedures—all the time underscoring the relevance of a compassionate therapeutic relationship to lessen suffering. Kudos to Drs. Neron and Handel, and Claude Langlois for this highly recommended and remarkable book.

## An Emerging Lab in Pediatric Psycho-Oncology

By **TATSIANA LECLAIR, BA, PsyD Candidate (Montreal)**

The **Laboratoire de recherche sur la qualité de vie et l'oncologie psychosociale** (*quality of life and psychosocial oncology lab*) is a Montreal-based psychology research group, whose mission is to better understand the complex psychosocial aspects related to paediatric chronic illnesses and survival, and to thereby promote a better quality of life for children, families and health providers. Most of the lab's research work is dedicated to paediatric cancer, but also includes other childhood illnesses such as hemophilia and primary immune system diseases. The lab's vision is to facilitate the difficult experience of paediatric cancer for all persons involved. Efforts are invested in understanding subjective experience and interpersonal dynamics amongst healthcare providers and families. The framework is an eco-

logical one, fostering a strong and cooperative environment for the ill child in order to promote resilience in children and their families. Founded in 2012 by Serge Sultan, Ph.D., the lab is located both in the Psychology department of Université de Montréal and in the Sainte-Justine UHC (Montréal, Canada). It has been recognized as an excellence center by the hospital research center and receives financial support from public and private institutions. The team is composed of 12 passionate psychology graduates and 2 research assistants. Coming from various backgrounds (e.g., pharmacy, fine arts), with most members also being active at the clinical level, the team's motivation and dedication towards introducing original research questions and methods that are sensitive and impactful to all stakeholders is truly palpable. Current research covers mindfulness-based stress reduction for prevention of physician

burnout, creation of video clips featuring parents of children with cancer to evaluate physicians' understanding of parental distress, and many other exciting projects (lab website will be up and running soon!). Collaboration with other Canadian cancer centers (Laval UHC, Québec; McMaster Children's Hospital, Hamilton) for research on psychoaffective issues encountered by ALL survivors is also presently being conducted (PSY-ALL study). The lab has so far published in a wide variety of health psychology journals (e.g., *Psycho-Oncology*, *Psychology and Health*, *BMC Family Practice*) and has presented research works in various conferences, such as the Congress of the International Society of Paediatric Oncology in Toronto. The lab hopes that its research will be able to help everyone involved in paediatric illness care, so that children survivors may grow into healthy adults.



**Dr. Serge Sultan, PhD**



# Help Make our Section Better!

By SERGE SULTAN, PhD (Montreal)

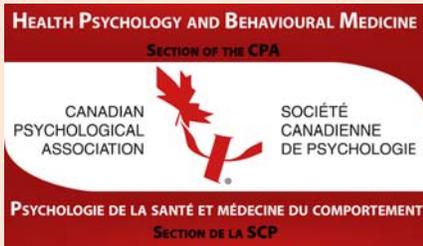
In the recent months, the section has taken important steps to enhance its development and visibility. Coming back from the last CPA convention in Vancouver, we realized how important it was to foster the link between research and practice. We hope that this newsletter issue speaks for this endeavor. Indeed, we have so much to bring to end-users and our communities. Creativity and excellence stand out as Canadian strengths in both research and practice. You can help display this is by participating in an upcoming issue or by presenting your work at the upcoming CPA convention in Ottawa.

Our past CPA President, Dr Wolfgang Linden, recently said “psychologists build bridges”. This could not be more true of health psychology! We therefore invite you to join the section and share your knowledge and professional/academic experiences.

If interested, please send an e-mail to the Chair : Kim Lavoie at [kiml\\_lavoie@yahoo.ca](mailto:kiml_lavoie@yahoo.ca), or myself at : [serge.sultan@umontreal.ca](mailto:serge.sultan@umontreal.ca).

**CPA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2015 (Ottawa, June 4th to 6th)**  
**<http://www.cpa.ca/Convention/>**

## Announcements



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### ***Students - Want to get involved in the CPA Health Section?***

We are presently looking to recruit post-doctorate and undergraduate student representatives. As members of the executive committee, these individuals will be responsible for providing guidance to students at their level of education. We are looking to involve students from Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. If interested, please send us your CV and a letter of intent at [kiml\\_lavoie@yahoo.ca](mailto:kiml_lavoie@yahoo.ca).

### ***Call for Nominations: The 2015 Senior Investigator Award***

Each year we attribute an Investigator Award to a researcher in the field of Health Psychology. In 2015, we will be honoring a senior investigator (>15 yrs since appointment) with a 500\$ cash award. You may nominate yourself or another individual. Please send us a CV, along with a short (.5 page) letter of presentation by Dec 31, 2014. You can submit these documents to [kiml\\_lavoie@yahoo.ca](mailto:kiml_lavoie@yahoo.ca). The winner will be announced in the newsletter's Winter edition, and will be invited to present their research in Ottawa at the 76th meeting of the CPA.