

CIMVHR Newsletter

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CIMVHR | ICRSMV

Over the past few months the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) has had great success in building our research connections with both universities and other partnerships. We are thrilled to announce that Université de Montréal has signed the Memorandum of Understanding with CIMVHR. As our 22nd university dedicated to high-impact research, knowledge creation and knowledge exchange they will certainly become part of an already outstanding network of Canadian universities. CIMVHR has also recently created a partnership with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Veterans Association (RCMP VA). These Pan-Canadian research connections made through CIMVHR will provide great benefits to all members.

CIMVHR has recently become a part of the Canadian Federation for Humanities and Social

Sciences who represent the national voice for the university research and learning community for more than 85, 000 researchers in 79 scholarly associations, 79 universities and colleges, and 5 affiliates. This will strengthen the institute's relationship with universities across Canada focussing on humanities.

Multidisciplinary in nature, CIMVHR is broadening its expertise in health research with a college of reviewers composed of 35 researchers representing our member universities and government affiliates. This will allow the diffusion, through our institute, of high impact and high quality research that is second to none.

Thank you for taking the time to enjoy the CIMVHR newsletter which will also be posted on the CIMVHR web site (www.cimvhr.ca).

Dr. Alice B. Aiken, Director and Dr. Stéphanie A.H. Bélanger, Associate Director

Projects Highlights: Research Connections

Dr. McFadyen is a professor in the Department of Rehabilitation at Laval University and a researcher in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Rehabilitation and Social Integration (CIRRIS) in Québec City. He is also a member of the CIMVHR College of Peer Reviewers. His research program is dedicated to understanding healthy and impaired mobility within environments posing both physical and cognitive challenges. His research uses diverse techniques including three dimensional biomechanical analyses and virtual reality.

Over the past several years his program has also concentrated on the residual effects of traumatic brain injury (TBI) on walking capacity. His publications have shown that even when basic walking capacity is well recovered following moderate and severe TBI, residual deficits remain in the ability to plan for and execute fine adjustments to step over or navigate around obstacles. These findings may begin to help explain decreased social participation following TBI in persons otherwise felt to have recovered ability. A recent doctoral dissertation from his laboratory has also shown that navigational ability is abnormal one month following a first diagnosed concussion in elite athletes who have been cleared for return to play.

The elite athlete may be a reasonable model for the highly trained and fit soldier for whom deficits in the ability to navigate complex environments following TBI could put both themselves and their peers in danger. Overall, this research involving TBI of all severities may help to inform better return to function guidelines.

Dr. McFadyen has been involved in the development of virtual reality (VR) technology and the CIRRIS houses an early version of the systems now used by the Canadian Forces Health Services in Ottawa and Edmonton. A PhD thesis under his supervision showing how virtual environments are navigated in the same manner as real ones has opened the door to exploit VR to further explore mobility deficits following TBI. Presently, Dr. McFadyen and Major Luc Hébert of Valcartier Garrison are heading up a team to develop specific VR technology to look a range of issues for military personnel from TBI to low back pain. Finally, Dr. McFadyen's research program also studies mobility in the elderly and more recently in persons with fear of falling and mild cognitive impairments. Such work will be of specific interest for better understanding and helping to improve the mobility of the veteran population of Canada.

Did you know...

The deadline to submit **Abstracts for MVHR Forum 2012** is Thursday, May 10th, 2012.

Visit <http://www.cimvhr.ca/> to submit yours today. Click on the MVHR Forum 2012 logo.

The **EARLY REGISTRATION RATE** of \$415.00 ends on Friday, September 7th. Register now at <http://www.cimvhr.ca/forum/registration.htm>

May 15th-17th, 2012 the Rick Hansen Institute will be hosting **Interdependence 2012—Global SCI conference**. For more information visit <http://www.rickhansen.com/What-We-Do/Interdependence-2012.aspx>

Dr. Alice Aiken has been asked to be a guest speaker at The First Annual International **WOMEN AND WAR CONFERENCE**

July 3-5, 2012, Hydra Island, GREECE
<http://www.ryerson.ca/theatreschool/conference.html>

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association will be hosting Congress 2012—Expanding Horizons in Saskatoon, SK May 24th-27th. For more information visit <http://www.physiotherapy.ca/public.asp?WCE=C=32%7CK=s226429>

Bell Canada Mental Health and Anti-Stigma Research Chair

Dr. Heather Stuart, a researcher associated with CIMVHR, has been appointed as the Bell Mental Health and Anti-Stigma Research Chair. The position, which is made available due to Bell Canada's support, is the first of its kind in the world, and seeks to reduce the negative perception surrounding mental health.

Dr. Stuart is a professor at Queen's University in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, and is also cross appointed to the Department psychiatry and the School of Rehabilitation Therapy. After having studied epidemiology and sociology during her university years, Dr. Stuart's strong sense of social justice led her towards the field of mental health, a field which she found to be often misunderstood. Dr. Stuart grew up on the grounds of psychiatric hospitals in Ontario, and interacted with those in distress from an early age. Her understanding of the challenges and demands faced by these individuals led her become a Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Scien-

tific Section on Stigma and Mental Disorders for the World Psychiatric Association.

In her new position as the Chair in Mental Health and Anti-Stigma, Dr. Stuart will be able to expand her existing research, and will also have the opportunity to mentor those who are undertaking new research in the area. In addition, she will also contribute research to peer-reviewed journals, speak at conferences and sponsor a yearly research lectureship on mental health and anti-stigma research at Queen's. Dr. Stuart also added that disseminating information faster is a vital part of her new role. CIMVHR would like to congratulate Dr. Stuart on her appointment as the world's first Chair in Mental Health and Anti-Stigma research. This is another excellent opportunity of collaboration for the advancement of research for the well-being of CF members, veterans and their families.

Third Annual MVHR Forum

Following the success of the 2010 and 2011 Forums, the third annual MVHR Forum will be taking place from November 26th to 28th, 2012 at the Ambassador Conference Resort in Kingston, Ontario. CIMVHR is proud to announce that Lieutenant-General Peter Devlin, Chief of the Land Staff for the Canadian Forces will be giving remarks at the opening ceremony. LGen Devlin's past accomplishments include being appointed as the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion of The Royal Canadian Regiment, and serving as the Canadian Battle Group Commanding Officer in Bosnia, as the Commander of the Kabul Multinational Brigade in Afghanistan, and as Deputy Commanding General of the Multi-National Corps in Iraq.

At this year's Forum both oral and poster presentations will relate to 1 of the 7 themes; Mental health research and rehabilitation in

active duty personnel, Veterans or families; Physical health research and rehabilitation in active duty personnel, Veterans or families; Social health and wellbeing of active duty personnel, Veterans or families; Novel health technologies that are relevant to military service; Transition from military to civilian life; Evolving treatment programs and clinical practices; and Occupational health. May 10, 2012 is the last day to submit abstracts for consideration. If you wish to present at MVHR Forum 2012, please ensure that your abstracts are submitted prior to this date. Early Registration for the 2012 MVHR Forum is now open, and will continue up until September 7th, 2012. Veterans and Student Registration is also open until September 7th 2012. Please visit www.cimvhr.ca/forumregistration.htm for pricing and more details.



Dr. Heather Stuart— Bell Canada Mental Health and Anti-Stigma Research Chair



Richard Reznick, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences; Daniel Woolf, Principal and Vice-Chancellor; Mary Deacon, Chair of the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative; Heather Stuart, inaugural holder of The Bell Mental Health and Anti-Stigma Research Chair; and Thomas O'Neill, chair of the board, BCE.

MVHR FORUM

www.cimvhr.ca

A special thank you goes out to Dr. Bradford McFadyen, from the University of Laval, for writing the article on *Research Connections: Projects Highlights*. Thank you to Queen's University for providing us with the photos for the *Bell Canada Mental Health and Anti-Stigma Research Chair* article. We would also like to thank CIMVHR's part-time work-study student Parth Bhowmick for his contribution to this newsletter.

For suggestions and announcements you wish to recommend for the CIMVHR e-newsletter please e-mail lauren.hanlon@queensu.ca