



# Research News

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## New grad course advances local health research

By Suzanne Smith, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Victoria

When a child ends up in intensive care they're not the only ones that need attention. This is also a very distressing time for their parents. Thanks to a new hands-on research course at UVic, psychology graduate student Rachel Yeung has helped the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) begin identifying effective care-giving strategies for parents whose children have been admitted to intensive care.

Last year Rachel Yeung and six other graduate students enrolled in Practicum in Applied Health Research and Knowledge Transfer, an interdisciplinary course facilitated by the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Knowledge Mobilization Unit (an initiative of UVic Research and York University that is funded by SSHRC and CIHR). The course, funded by the BC Child and Youth Health Research Network, was developed as a result of a partnership with the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

"I took this course because I wanted the opportunity to work collaboratively within the community on a project with the potential to be on-going," explains Yeung. "This experience allowed me to apply my knowledge in research design and methodology to a real-life problem and learn directly from health practitioners working in the field."

Yeung's course assignment involved working with Drs. Amanda Barclay and Raphael Beck, two Victoria General Hospital pediatric intensive care doctors—known in the medical community as pediatric intensivists—to develop a needs assessment survey that measured parent satisfaction. The goal of the survey was to assess whether or not the hospital's pediatric intensive care unit, the only service of its kind on Vancouver Island, is currently meeting the needs of parents and children in the region and, if not, what improvements should be made. Specifically the survey was to measure the parent's degree of satisfaction with the technical skills of the staff, the staff's ability to keep them informed about their children's condition, the responsiveness of the staff to the emotional needs of the parents and their children, and the parents' overall level of satisfaction with the intensive care services.

**Continued on page 2.**

## Message from the Director

A new research initiative focused on the role of nurses in BC's health system has been launched with \$8 million of funding from the Ministry of Health and the support of the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR). We are very excited to work with this new initiative to enhance our Research Capacity within VIHA.



Research priorities and strategies have been recommended with a second phase of this initiative planned for the summer of 2008. You can learn more about this on the fact sheet attached.

The Capacity-Building team is supported by a grant from:



**Continued from page 1.**

Yeung conducted an extensive literature review to identify previous measures of parent satisfaction relevant to the questions identified by VIHA and the pediatric intensive care unit. Then, through consultation with Barclay and Beck, she developed other new measures for the survey and developed procedures for administering the survey confidentially within the intensive care unit. VIHA plans to conduct the survey some time this year, and the two pediatric intensivists are pleased with the results. In fact, they have expressed interest in working with Yeung on future research projects.

Course co-instructor Dr. Bonnie Leadbeater (psychology) is thrilled with Yeung's success and the other impressive achievements of her classmates.

"This class is about doing something real that matters to the community. In classes like this the level of responsibility goes up a notch—both for the instructors and for the students. The students work isn't just being graded, it's being used to help make the world a better place," says Leadbeater.

Wayne Mitic, director of chronic disease prevention evaluation with the Population Health Division of the Ministry of Health and co-instructor of this course, agrees with Leadbeater.

"This course really exceeded our expectations—we are so proud of the students. A course like this gives students hands-on research knowledge and allows them to work directly with people in the field. This kind of experience can only benefit students when they are seeking employment down the road," says Mitic.

VIHA is also pleased with the students' results. Peter Kirk, VIHA's director of research and academic development, explains that by "building VIHA's research capacity, the students are helping the organization to conduct more research which will ultimately benefit the people of Vancouver Island."

Some of the other student research projects included a review of best practices for addressing the problems of youth who are suffering from mental health issues and substance abuse; the production of a questionnaire to measure couples' awareness of the dangers of alcohol use during pregnancy; and an assessment of a position at Nanaimo General Hospital dedicated to helping facilitate the flow of people from emergency to other parts of the hospital.

The second Practicum in Applied Health Research and Knowledge Transfer will be offered in September 2008.

A course with a similar format also facilitated by the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Knowledge Mobilization Unit will be offered in May 2008. Entitled Special Topics in Applied Research in BC Wildlife, Ecosystems and Parks, it was developed through a partnership with the Environmental Stewardship Division of the BC Ministry of Environment.

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Proto-Professor Algarth Zag, pioneer in fire research.

Cartoon by Nick D Kim, nearingzero.net.

## Proposed Functional Magnetic Imaging

Dr. Steve Lindsay, the Coordinator of the Cognition and Brain Sciences Program in the Department of Psychology at UVic, along with colleagues, are at the early stages of applying for a Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) grant to establish a functional magnetic imaging (fMRI) facility at UVic. Whereas regular MRI images the shape and density of internal structures, fMRI provides such structural information but also images the flow of oxygenated blood in the brain. fMRI is the dominant tool that cognitive neuroscientists use to develop and test models of brain function.

One major determinant of the outcome of the proposal will be the extent to which reviewers are convinced that there will be a substantial, multidisciplinary, multi-institution community of users of the proposed facility. Dr Lindsay and his colleagues are interested in recruiting major figures in VIHA as potential partners in this project. At this stage it would require a commitment in principle to using the facility given adequate funding. The primary purpose of the proposed facility would be research, but it is hoped that would include clinical research involving professionals from VIHA. Also, the facility might be used for training technicians, nurses, and doctors.

If you are interested to learn more, please contact Stephen Lindsay, Ph.D., Professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Victoria.

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**Voice:** 250-721-8593

## BCEOHRN Research Capacity Development Fund

The BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network [Research Capacity Development Fund](#) has two purposes:

1. To help new researchers (which includes post-secondary students) develop nationally competitive research proposals
2. To help develop new research teams that will be able to successfully compete for research funds at the national and international level.

For the purpose of this award, a new researcher is defined as a person actively involved in environmental or occupational health research that has not successfully competed for SSHRC, CIHR, or NSERC proposals on which they were the primary investigator. Successful applicants will be required to report to the BCEOHRN as to the success of the fund's allocation with respect to increasing research capacity or securing additional research support within one year of receiving the funds. Maximum \$10,000

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## Upcoming Events

### February

#### [Centre on Aging Community Forum](#)

February 21, 2008  
8:30 am to 4:00 pm in the David Strong Building, University of Victoria.  
**Topic:** Life History

Victoria Hospice Society Staff Research Forum

February 21, 2008  
12:30-3:30 Woodward Room, Begbie Hall, RJH  
Contact Jan Walker to register:  
janet.walker@viha.ca

#### [The 6th World Congress on The Aging Male](#)

February 21-24, 2008  
Tampa, Florida

#### [6<sup>th</sup> Annual Geriatric Services Conference](#)

February 22, 2008  
Vancouver

### March

#### [24<sup>th</sup> Annual Cardiovascular Conference](#)

March 16-20, 2008  
Lake Louise

### April

#### [CAPPE 2008 Return to the Garden: Cultivating Growth, Hope and Healing](#)

9 to 12 April 2008  
Victoria

#### [Third National Biennial Conference on Adolescents and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder](#)

*FASD and Mental Health: The Wisdom of Practice*  
April 10 - 12, 2008  
Vancouver

#### [Interior Health's 3rd Annual Research Conference](#)

*From Research to Practice and Back Again*  
With keynote speaker Dr. Maureen Dobbins (McMaster University)  
April 28-29, 2008  
Kelowna

### May

#### [Women's Health Research Network - Summer Institute 2008](#)

*Bridging silos in women's health research: Forging connections across disciplines and diversities*  
May 1 & 2, 2008  
Victoria

#### [The ICAV Sixth International Symposium](#)

May 4 - 6, 2008  
Toronto & Peterborough, Ontario

#### [Community-University Partnerships: Connecting for Change](#)

May 4-7, 2008  
University of Victoria

#### [BCRRHRN Rural Health: Building Research Together](#)

May 13-14, 2008  
Prince George, BC

#### [Canadian Congress on Leisure Research \(CCLR 12\)](#)

May 13-16, 2008  
Montreal, Quebec

#### [Creative Expression, Communication and Dementia and Mindscapes 2008](#)

May 30-31, 2008  
Emily Carr, Institute of Art and Design  
Granville Island, Vancouver

### June

#### [34th Annual Alcohol Epidemiology Symposium of the Kettil Bruun Society](#)

June 2-6, 2008  
Victoria

#### [International Nursing Research Conference](#)

*Facing the Challenge of Health Care Systems in Transition*  
June 30-July 3, 2008  
Jerusalem, Israel

### August

#### [15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Cancer Nursing](#)

August 17-21, 2008  
Singapore

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Michael Smith Foundation for  
**Health Research**

# BC Nursing Research Initiative (BCNRI)

*Supporting practice-relevant nursing research*

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The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) has received \$8 million from the BC Ministry of Health to implement a Nursing Research Initiative. This funding – and the work it will support – recognizes the pivotal position of nurses within our healthcare system.

By building partnerships between researchers and practicing nurses to focus on practice-relevant health services research, this initiative will support innovations in the practice environment that help nurses work more effectively. When nurses are supported to work effectively, patient care improves, job satisfaction increases, recruitment and retention are easier – and the foundation for a high-quality, efficient healthcare system is that much stronger.

## Why do we need an initiative on nursing research in BC?

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There is a severe shortage of nurses in BC, creating a pressing need for more nurses at every level of the health system. The resulting strain – on patients, on nurses and on the health system itself – is intense and growing. It's a situation calling out for research to develop, evaluate and refine new approaches to nursing practice and care delivery. Yet BC's capacity for undertaking this research is under-resourced.

Further, there is no provincial coordinating mechanism for research planning and information-

sharing across health authorities, the Ministry of Health and the academic community. The result is:

- Difficulty identifying who is doing what research
- Difficulty linking nurses who have research needs with health services research expertise
- Difficulty in applying research evidence to practice and measuring the results
- Difficulty determining research priorities and capacity gaps

## How will the Nursing Research Initiative help?

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Key to the success of the BC Nursing Research Initiative is having the right people at the table to guide the effort. Our Nursing Research Advisory Council is broadly representative of the nursing profession and includes members from the nursing practice, policy and academic communities (see overleaf). These leaders bring their unique perspectives and experience to the Nursing Research Initiative, as well as a shared commitment to realizing its success for the benefit of patients, nurses and the health system overall.

A second, equally vital step is understanding what is happening now and what needs to happen next. What are the priority research needs, what's been

done to address them, what is our current research capacity and what are the missing pieces? Once this environment is understood, we can prioritize steps to address needs and fill gaps.

*“Our goal is to focus existing research strengths and build more capacity for practice-relevant research that informs innovation in nursing practice – ultimately, what we want to achieve is better health outcomes for patients and a better quality of work life for nurses.”*

*Dr. Lynn Stevenson,  
Co-Chair, BC Nursing Research Advisory Council*

## What is happening, and when will we hear more?

During the first phase of the Nursing Research Initiative – November 2007 through spring 2008 – two Nursing Research Advisory Council task forces will develop recommendations for:

- Research priorities
- Strategies to build BC's capacity to do the research

There will be opportunity for community feedback through the MSFHR website as part of this process. Once endorsed by the Nursing Research Advisory Council, the recommendations will be distributed for approval by the Board of the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research.

The second phase of the initiative – planned for summer 2008 – will see the launch of funding

initiatives to address research priorities and strategies for building research capacity.

Regular updates on progress will be posted on the MSFHR website. In addition, a series of presentations and other outreach strategies will be developed to introduce and support the implementation of approved programs.

*"The BC Nursing Research Initiative is about strengthening BC's position as a locus for world-class nursing research and development - and as a hub for innovation in nursing practice."*

*Dr. Pam Ratner,  
Co-Chair, BC Nursing Research Advisory Council*

## BC Nursing Research Initiative Advisory Council Members

**Lynn Stevenson**  
(Co-Chair)  
Chief of Professional Practice and Nursing, Vancouver Island Health Authority

**Pam Ratner**  
(Co-Chair)  
Professor, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia

**Jeanne Besner**  
Director, Health Systems & Workforce Research Unit, Calgary Health Region

**Patricia Coward**  
(Secretariat)  
Executive Director, Health Services and Policy Research Support Network, MSFHR

**Julie Foreman**  
Clinical Nurse Leader, Vancouver Coastal Health

**Tom Fulton**  
Leader, Professional Practice & Chief Nursing Officer, Interior Health

**Cherry Graf**  
Vice President, External Affairs, MSFHR

**Gulrose Jiwani**  
Executive Director, Nursing Directorate, Ministry of Health

**Laurianne Jodouin**  
Director, Nursing Directorate, BC Ministry of Health

**Catherine Kidd**  
Regional Director, Worksafe & Wellness, Vancouver Coastal Health

**Ranjit Lehal**  
Nurse Practitioner, Home Health, Fraser Health

**Martha MacLeod**  
Associate Professor, Nursing and Community Health Programs, Faculty of Health & Human Sciences, University of Northern British Columbia

**Darlene Martin**  
Manager, Aboriginal Health, Vancouver Island Health Authority

**Edna McLellan**  
Community Health Nurse, Northern Health

**Barbara Mildon**  
Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President, Professional Practice and Integration, Fraser Health

**Anita Molzahn**  
Professor, School of Nursing, University of Victoria

**Mary Ellen Purkis**  
Dean, Faculty of Human & Social Development, University of Victoria

**Fay F. Warnock**  
Nurse Scientist, Children's & Women's Health Centre of BC Provincial Health Services Authority; Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia

**Patricia Wejr**  
Senior Policy Analyst, BC Nurses' Union

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[www.msfhr.org/sub-strategic-nursing.htm](http://www.msfhr.org/sub-strategic-nursing.htm)