



# Research News

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### *Core Functions in Public Health*

**A study focused on strengthening the BC public Health System.**

Principal Investigator: Marjorie McDonald

Marjorie McDonald, at the University of Victoria, is heading up a new research team to study the implementation of a Framework for Core Functions in Public Health. To strengthen the public health system, 21 Core Programs in the areas of health improvement, disease, injury and disability prevention, environmental health, and health emergency management are being implemented in BC. This study will engage in a participatory research approach to study the Knowledge to Action (KTA) process of the core programs implementation. Each of the 21 core programs has or will have an evidence review paper with identification of best practices outlined in a model core program paper. These papers are resources to the Health Authorities (HA). Each HA are to identify the gap between their current services and the evidence for best practice to develop plans, targets, indicators and information systems needed for each core program to be implemented. As the HAs develop their own knowledge exchange process and performance improvement plans, the opportunity arises for a “natural experiment” to study how evidence is used to support program development/improvement, effective KTA strategies, and the impact of the strategies, as well as the use of evidence on common indicators. Using systems theory with an ecological perspective and a comprehensive KTA framework, the team will conduct participatory case studies in VIHA, Interior Health and Vancouver Coastal Health.

The focus of the study will be to document, describe, and explain the KTA process in one core program that has already been implemented as well as one that is beginning to be implemented. The outcomes of interest in this study will be locally defined core program implementation and enhanced local capacity to use evidence in planning and service delivery. The team anticipates the identification, implementation and evaluation of appropriate KTA strategies to support core program implementation in the HAs. Main data collection methods are expected to be concept mapping, key informant interviews, focus groups, document reviews, observations and questionnaires. The research method and process will be determined collaboratively. At the end of the first year of study, the team is expecting to hold a regional level Knowledge Exchange workshop. At the end of the second year a Knowledge Exchange workshop will be help provincially to which all HAs will be invited. This will provide a forum for exchanging knowledge about:

- a) How the process is unfolding in each health authority.
- b) The mid-course corrections being implemented in each health authority in response to data being gathered for the performance improvement process.
- c) Developing recommendations for ongoing study and knowledge exchange.



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



**MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR:** In this month's issue we feature Public Health and I was reminded of the story of the Broad Street pump handle. In 1855 there was a cholera epidemic in London and Dr John Snow deduced that a lot of cases were from residents who drew their water from a particular well. On September 7<sup>th</sup> 1855 he obtained permission from the Board of Guardians who did not believe his theory but "the pump was closed nevertheless and the plague was stayed." Dr Snow is credited with being the father of modern day epidemiology.



**MATERNAL SMOKING. CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: DR. LORRAINE GREAVES AND DR. ZIM OKOLI FROM THE BC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH**

Tobacco use remains an important modifiable cause of poor pregnancy outcomes. Despite considerable efforts by health care professionals, and an overall reduction in smoking prevalence, approximately 16% of pregnant women living in the VIHA catchment area still smoke during pregnancy. Rates are even higher in teenage mothers and women living in low-income settings. To date, smoking cessation interventions to reduce smoking during pregnancy and postpartum have been relatively unsuccessful with 70%-90% relapsing within one year postpartum. To address these high rates of smoking during pregnancy, a working group comprised of researchers and service providers was formed in January 2008. Since coming together, the group has been awarded a \$15,000 Canadian Tobacco Control and Research Initiative grant entitled "Assessing smoking cessation interventions by providers among pregnant girls and women". The specific aims of this research planning grant are:



1. To form a multi-disciplinary team of health care providers (physicians, public health nurses) and researchers to address the issue of improving provider-based assessment of smoking and provision of brief interventions for smoking cessation among pregnant girls and women.
2. To conduct an updated literature review of studies pertaining to approaches for health care providers to reduce smoking relapse among pregnant women.
3. Develop a proposal to implement a strategy to assist health care providers in implementing smoking cessation among pregnant girls and women in Vancouver Island.

The project will run from June 2008 until May 2009 under Primary Investigators Drs. Lorraine Greaves and Zim Okoli from the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. Project Investigators also include representatives of the University of British Columbia and VIHA's Child, Youth, and Family Health and Chief Medical Health Officer's departments.

For more information, please contact Mike Pennock.

### **RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE**

The Public and Population Health Observatory is a partner in a national network of surveillance surveys funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. In 2007 a behavioural risk-factor survey of the gay male population in Victoria (M-Track) was completed and a survey of injection drug users (I-Track) in the central and north island is under development for implementation in the fall of 2008. The PPHO is in the process of developing a collaboration with researchers from the University of Victoria to investigate the application of modeling techniques to these databases to better understand the relationship between risk behaviours and the prevalence of hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS.

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Walker

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## VIHA RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT: HEATHER COOK, RN, MSN



“Research can change how health professionals provide care to the dying,” says Heather Cook, Director of Health and Residential Services for Vancouver Island Health Authority.

Heather began her nursing career after moving to Victoria from the small West Kootenay community of New Denver, B.C (population 600). After completing her Bachelors of Nursing at the University of Victoria she went on to obtain her Masters of Science in Nursing at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. While completing her Bachelors, Heather had many opportunities to work with Clinical Nurse Specialists involved in research. After completed her thesis which focused on understanding nurses knowledge of psychotropic medications in residential settings, Heather was presented with the opportunity of Co-Investigator for a current research study *measuring the quality of end of life care provided in inpatient health care settings* being funded by the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research. Presently, the study is in the data analysis phase. Heather expresses that “the main goal of this research study is for health care professionals to gain an understanding of the family’s perspective or perception of the care that is provided during someone’s dying period.” The underlying question of the study is whether or not families are receiving as much support as they require. Once the research study is completed the goal is to translate that knowledge and information into either educating health care professionals about the family’s perspective or to change the way one provides care when someone is dying in hopes of presenting the best care possible to the patient *and* their family.

**RESEARCH DAY AT QA: HIGHLIGHTING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE WITHIN VIHA. SAVE the DAY!! NOVEMBER 17, 2008; 8:30AM-4:30PM**

### EVERYONE WELCOME!

The day will showcase the diversity of research occurring in VIHA and how research evidence can inform practice, programs, and policy. This is an excellent opportunity to make connections, and find research supports and collaborations. A limited number of travel grants are available for those traveling from out-of-town. Many of the presentations will also be video-linked to other sites. Students are encouraged to submit poster abstracts for the Student Poster Display and Competition.



Coffee, snacks and lunch provided. Contact the [Research Capacity Building Office](#) and check the [website](#) for more information. Research Day is a Research Capacity Building Initiative, sponsored by the Michael Smith Foundation.

To subscribe/unsubscribe to the newsletter or to suggest a feature or highlight your research, please contact:  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### July

[Research In Action: Community-Based Research in Local and Global Perspectives](#)

July 16-28, 2008  
University of Victoria

[Social Determinants Of Indigenous Health: Community-Based Participatory Action Research](#)

July 21-25, 2008  
Banff, AB

### August

[National Collaborating Centres for Public Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada SUMMER INSTITUTE](#)

August 5-7, 2008  
Kelowna, BC

[Canadian Ecohealth Training and Awards Program](#)

August 5-15, 2008  
Vancouver, BC

[6th Annual Qualitative Research Summer Intensive](#)

August 9-14, 2008  
Long Island, United States

[Embracing the Diverse Roles of Aboriginal Nurses](#)

August 14-16, 2008  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

[15th International Conference on Cancer Nursing](#)

August 17-21, 2008  
Singapore

### September

[Introduction to Health Economics: A One-Day Workshop](#)

September 19  
University of Victoria

[Population Health & Learning Observatory: Health Geomatics Workshop 2008 - Advancing Research Capacity in British Columbia](#)

September 22-23, 2008  
Victoria, BC

[6th Annual World Congress on the Insulin Resistance Syndrome](#)

September 25-27  
Los Angeles, CA

### October

[14th Annual Counseling Skills Conference](#)

October 2-4  
Las Vegas, Nevada

[2008 Neuro Essentials National Nursing Conference](#)

October 13-14  
Las Vegas, Nevada

[Sixth International Symposium: Public Health & the Agricultural Rural Ecosystem](#)

October 19-23, 2008  
Saskatoon, SK

[R&D Leaders' Forum 2008](#)

October 28-30  
San Diego, California

### November

[Annual Conference on Food, Nutrition and Cancer](#)

November 6-7, 2008  
Washington, DC

[32nd Annual Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse \(AMERSA\) National Conference](#)

November 6-8  
Washington, DC

[Re-Imagining Health Services: Innovations in Community Health](#)

November 6-8, 2008  
Vancouver, BC

[Treating Tobacco Dependence in Mental Health Settings](#)

November 14-15  
New Brunswick, New Jersey

VIHA Research Day

November 17, 2008  
Queen Alexandra Hospital Auditorium

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[BC Injury Prevention Conference](#)  
[Partnering with the Public for Injury Prevention](#)

November 19-21  
Vancouver, BC

**December**

[Workplace Integration of New Nurses - Nursing the Future](#)

December 3-5  
Saskatoon, SK



Cirrhosis of the river.

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