

# BAYCREST BULLETIN

*A snapshot of Baycrest news and events / July - August 2022*

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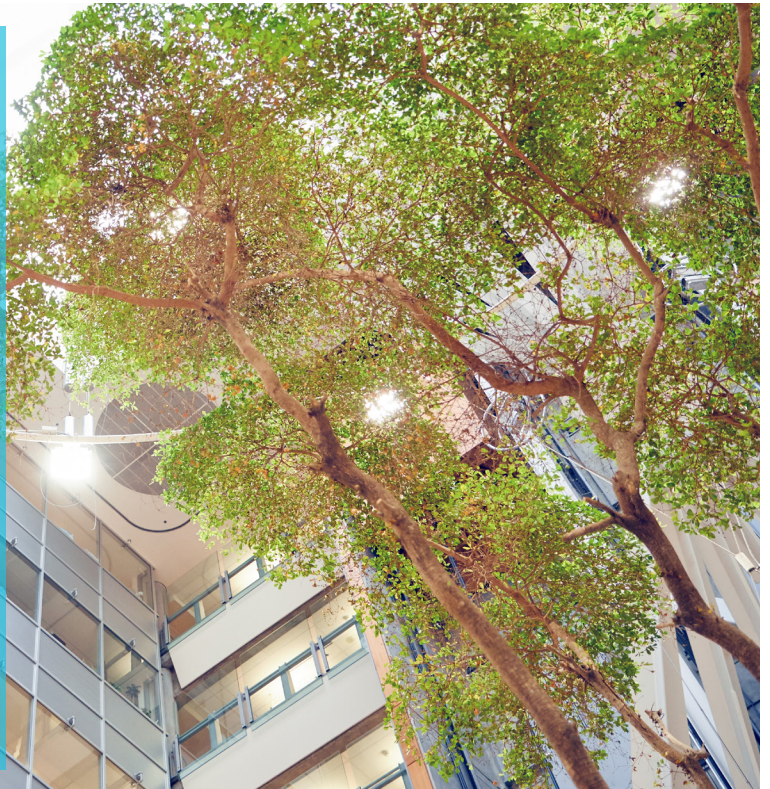
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## Older Adults May Be Better at Listening in Noisy Social Settings Than Has Long Been Thought

Do you ever grumble when your grandpa wins yet another spirited game of gin rummy; or mutter under your breath when grandma asks you to help clean the table? Well, there is a good chance they can hear you better than you think.

A new Baycrest and Western University study suggests older adults may have better listening skills in noisy environments than previously thought. This could improve their quality of life and help them make meaningful connections with others, ultimately reducing their risk of social isolation and dementia - since social isolation is a risk factor for cognitive decline.

Scientists have long thought that compared to younger adults, older adults seem to be less able to use speech "glimpses" (using the speech they hear more clearly during brief reductions in background noise) to better understand conversations in noisy settings.

However, the Baycrest-Western University study, published in *Scientific Reports*, shows that this may only be the case for



the relatively boring, disconnected and unnatural sentences that are typically used in laboratory settings, but not for more natural speech.

The researchers found that for more natural speech that mimics speaking in everyday life, such as stories, older

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adults benefited from speech glimpses as much as, or more than, younger adults. Conversely, they benefited less when listening to disconnected sentences.

"These results suggest that older adults may be better at listening in noisy social settings than previously thought. Our study also highlights the importance of cognitive and motivational factors for speech understanding," says Dr. Björn Herrmann, Baycrest's Canada Research Chair in

Auditory Aging and Scientist at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute.

With additional funding, Dr. Herrmann and his team could investigate what brain mechanisms enable older adults to benefit more from natural speech than disconnected laboratory sentences and how natural speech could be more extensively used in clinical practice to assess older adults' hearing.

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## Introducing Baycrest's New, Innovative Health Literacy and Information Hub



Sixty per cent of Canadians and up to 88 per cent of seniors have low health literacy – that is, the skills needed to find, understand, evaluate, communicate and then use reliable health

information for better health.

To address this issue and provide an exceptional person- and family-centred residential and healthcare experience, Baycrest has revitalized and enhanced the Health Information Library (formerly the Wellness Library) on the first floor of the Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged to become an innovative health literacy and information hub. The newly renovated library is scheduled to reopen on July 25, 2022.

Located on the first floor of the Apotex Centre, the new space is one where residents, patients, staff, caregivers

and community members will have access to reliable health information so they can participate in their care and more effectively manage their condition for better health. Trained volunteers will assist with finding relevant and personalized information. Through our curated educational resources, we aim to improve patient engagement and experience, and encourage active partnership in their care and quality of life.

Going hand-in-hand with the Health Information Library, our online Health Information Portal aims to educate residents, patients, staff, caregivers and community members about aging and brain health through reliable resources. The portal offers high-quality, online educational material in various formats, such as brochures, guides, videos, web-based programs and eLearning modules.

With the portal and the library, we aim to provide an inclusive, person- and family-centred experience. To learn more, visit [www.baycrest.org/HealthInfoLibrary](http://www.baycrest.org/HealthInfoLibrary).

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## Baycrest's Canada Research Chair in Neuroimaging of Aging to Deliver Non-invasive Brain Health Interventions



Dr. Chen - Senior Scientist at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI).

Baycrest is pleased to announce that Dr. Jean Chen has been named the Canada Research Chair in Neuroimaging of Aging for a second consecutive term.

A Senior Scientist at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI), Dr. Chen is an expert on the heart-brain connection and a pioneer in the use of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to examine blood fluctuations

in the brain as an indicator of brain health.

"Heart health has a powerful influence on brain function and can be improved with certain lifestyle factors," says Dr. Chen, Associate Professor of Medical Biophysics and Biomedical Engineering at the University of Toronto.

"However, addressing lifestyle can seem overwhelming, and some older adults may not be ready or able to do so. I aim to deliver non-invasive, personalized interventions to improve brain health as an alternative to implementing broad lifestyle changes."

One of these interventions is low-level laser therapy, where an infrared laser penetrates the skull to improve vascular health and blood flow in the brain, enhancing brain activity.

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In another study, Dr. Chen is collaborating with Drs. Nasreen Khatri and Linda Mah to examine the effects of breathing exercises and cognitive behavioural therapy on mood and cognition in older adults. Regarding new interventions being able to take place in the home rather than a clinical setting, Dr. Chen sees this as “the way of the future.”

“We applaud the Canada Research Chair program for recognizing Dr. Chen’s critical work in the neuroimaging

of aging, which significantly advances the RRI’s vision of predictive neuroscience for precision aging,” says Dr. Allison Sekuler, President and Chief Scientist of the Baycrest Academy for Research and Education of which the RRI is a part. “Her research will profoundly impact the lives of many older adults, creating a world in which everyone is empowered to age fearlessly.”

## Baycrest and KILN Develop a Language App to Help Revitalize Indigenous Languages



Indigenous languages in North America are at a crossroads. Due to the aging of remaining first language speakers and the interruption of transmission from generation to generation, language maintenance and revitalization efforts are highly time-sensitive.

To address this issue, Baycrest and the Kingston Indigenous Language Nest (KILN) are using neuroscience and community engagement to develop a software-based language course for Ojibwe (or Anishinaabemowin) and to evaluate its use in adult learners.

Through their partnership with Baycrest, KILN will offer a language course based on spaced repetition software, which is itself based on decades of research in psychology and neuroscience to optimize learning. The software is adaptive. For example, if a user keeps getting a word right, they won’t see it very much. In contrast, they will see words they get wrong more often.

Baycrest and KILN will first pilot the use of their language course with adult learners of Ojibwe, who mostly learn on their own. Ultimately, their aim is to make it transferrable to other Indigenous and under-researched languages, to help adult learners across Canada and worldwide.

## A Walk for the Ages at Canada’s Wonderland Returns



**A WALK FOR THE AGES**  
In Support of  
**Baycrest**

On Sunday, September 11, 2022, the Baycrest Foundation will host the second annual *A Walk for the Ages* in support of Baycrest. This event will again gather families, friends and companies to raise money for Baycrest’s most urgent needs by asking participants to walk through Canada’s Wonderland.

Staff are invited to register for free using Promo Code FREE4STAFF on the event’s registration page. All participants will be expected to fundraise a minimum amount prior to the walk.

For more information or to register, visit the [awalkfortheages.ca](http://awalkfortheages.ca) or contact [jslessor@baycrest.org](mailto:jslessor@baycrest.org).



# Innovation Updates



## A Special Baycrest@Home Exercise Class for a Client's 101<sup>st</sup> Birthday

A member of Baycrest@Home (B@H) was asked what she wanted for her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday, and her response was "Patti's Seated Exercise class." Although not on the program schedule for her big day, the B@H team got to work. With a just few schedule changes and a save-the-date invitation to fellow subscribers, exercise instructors Patti and Jenn teamed up to host an extra-special seated exercise program. B@H members joined to celebrate this milestone birthday with their cherished friend and created a moment to remember. Learn more about B@H's virtual community at <https://baycrestathome.ca/>

## Test Your Hearing Using Baycrest's New Online Tool

The Baycrest Hearing Services team is committed to ensuring that you have the tools, support and resources you need for optimal hearing health. That is why they are pleased to announce the launch of a new online screening tool that may help you or your loved ones detect hearing loss. The hearing tool is free, takes roughly 10 minutes to complete and is available to anyone who is curious about their hearing health. At the end of the test, you will see results that will let you know if you may have hearing loss. Those who want to know more will have the opportunity to connect with a Baycrest Audiologist for a complimentary 15-minute chat. To take the test, go to [bit.ly/TestMyHearing](https://bit.ly/TestMyHearing).



# Bike for Brain Health Raises Nearly \$3 Million for Baycrest



Congratulations go out to the Baycrest Foundation colleagues on the success of the inaugural Mattamy Homes Bike for Brain Health. On June 5, more than 5,000 fundraising participants cycled along the DVP and Gardiner Expressway (traffic-free), and helped raise around \$3 million in support of Baycrest.

Baycrest also thanks the 130 Baycrest staff members and volunteers who participated. Next year's Bike for Brain Health is scheduled for Sunday, June 4, 2023.



Baycrest is fully affiliated  
with the University of Toronto

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