

BAYCREST BULLETIN

A snapshot of Baycrest news and events / October-November 2022

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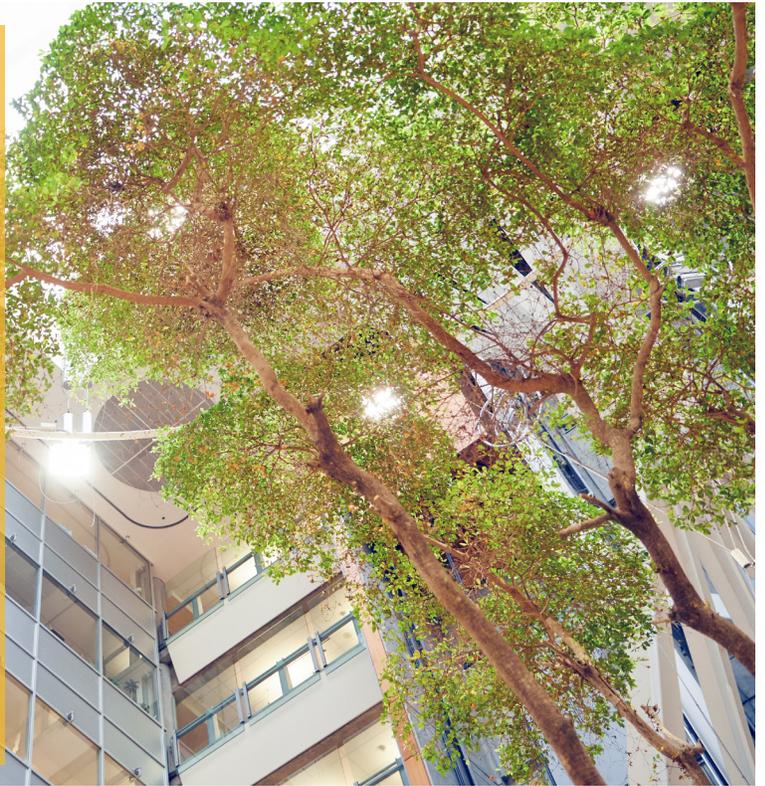
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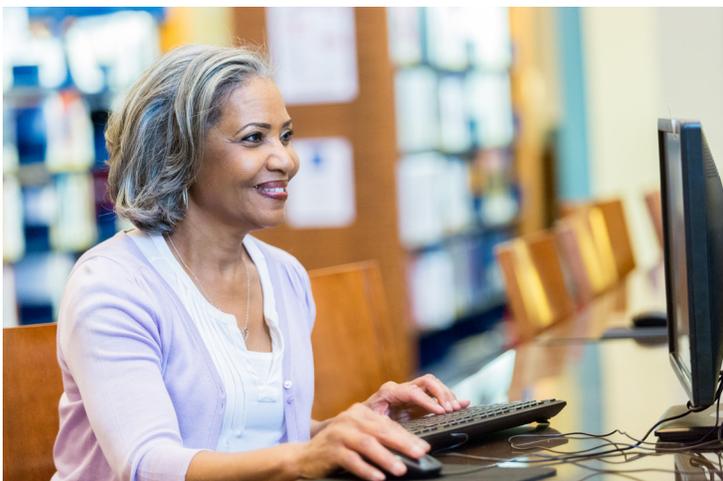
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Health Literacy: Empowering Older Adults to Improve Their Health and Well-Being



October is Health Literacy Awareness Month. Health literacy is a person's ability to obtain, read, understand and use information about their health. Among other things, health literacy helps us to prevent health problems, protect our health, ask relevant health-related questions and understand the answers, and better manage health problems as they arise.

Sixty per cent of Canadians and up to 88 per cent of seniors have low health literacy, presenting a great risk to their health and well-being. To help address this issue, Baycrest staff are provided with training and resources to support clients' health literacy. In addition, Baycrest has created a number of helpful resources for clients and community members, targeted to the health information needs of older adults.

- Baycrest's Health Information Portal is a centralized, online hub for reliable health information. It can be accessed at www.baycrest.org/Baycrest/Health-Information.
- Located on the first floor of the Baycrest Apotex Centre, the Centre for Health Information is a space where residents, patients, staff, caregivers and community members have access to reliable health information so they can participate in their care and better manage their condition or illness for better health.

Visit www.baycrest.org/HealthInfoLibrary to learn more.

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- The Health Literacy Roadmap is a self-directed activation booklet developed to help clients and families actively engage in their care. It can be found at www.baycrest.org/HealthLiteracyRoadmap.
- Two eLearning modules are available for caregivers at www.baycrest.org/CaregiverModules.

With these resources, Baycrest is helping pave the way to better health and well-being, and making trusted health care information available to older adults in Canada and around the world.

Baycrest is grateful to its generous donors for providing funds for the development of these resources.

Research Suggests Gut Microbiome Plays a Role in Lifestyle's Effects on Dementia Risk

The gut microbiome may play a role in how diet and exercise affect brain health and dementia risk, suggests a new Baycrest study. This knowledge could help scientists and clinicians optimize strategies to prevent dementia.

Lifestyle interventions to reduce dementia risk often include diet and exercise, which are known to affect the gut microbiome - the community of bacteria and other microorganisms that live in our gut.

"We know that imbalances in the microbiome are associated with impaired cognition," says Noah Koblinsky, lead author of the study, Exercise Physiologist and Project Coordinator at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI). "However, we don't know much about the role of the microbiome when we use lifestyle interventions, such as diet and exercise, to support brain health. Can we tailor lifestyle interventions to specifically target the gut microbiome, and will this help to optimize their effects on cognition? In this review study, we aimed to address this gap in knowledge."

To this end, Koblinsky and his team reviewed all of the existing research on diet and exercise interventions that looked at both the microbiome and brain health. They found that the gut microbiome does appear to play a role in how diet and exercise affect brain health, though more research is needed to fully understand how. There were fewer studies looking at exercise. However, those that did suggest that starting exercise, specifically aerobic exercise, can lead to changes in the gut microbiome and brain health at the same time.

Overall, the researchers found a clear need for more research on whole diet and exercise interventions looking at both the



microbiome and brain health, particularly in older adults at risk of dementia.

The researchers are now launching their diet and exercise randomized controlled trial and are looking to secure funding to include analysis of microbiome changes.

"By better understanding how changes to the gut microbiome affect the relationship between lifestyle and brain health, we can strengthen existing lifestyle interventions and create new strategies to reduce dementia risk, helping older adults everywhere age fearlessly," says Dr. Nicole Anderson, Senior Scientist at the RRI, Associate Scientific Director of Baycrest's Kimel Family Centre for Brain Health and Wellness, and the senior author of this study.

This research was supported by a grant from the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA), which is supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) with funding from several partners.

The Rotman Research Institute Releases Its 2021-22 Annual Report



Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI) recently released its 2021-22 annual report, which celebrates the critical research taking place at the RRI and across the Baycrest campus.

Among other things, it highlights a small selection of the ways in which Baycrest researchers are furthering

the prevention, detection and treatment of dementia, and features some of the many individuals without whom research at Baycrest and the RRI would not be possible.

The report is available online at www.baycrest.org/RRIannualreport2022

Staff Spotlight – Nishita Kamath



The Baycrest Bulletin is shining a light on our employees, who are helping create a world where every older adult enjoys a life of purpose, inspiration and fulfilment. In this edition, meet Nishita Kamath, a Quality and Process Improvement Consultant at Baycrest.

Nishita first discovered her fascination for hospital operations when she was little. Questions would spring up: “What is the doctor thinking? And are the family members happy?” Little did she know that her imagination would lead her into a role that allowed her to answer those questions.

Nishita started her journey at Baycrest in September 2020. She graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in Industrial Engineering. Before Baycrest, she completed a Certificate Course in Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (CQI/PS) and her Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, proving her commitment to improving her business acumen and analytical skills. “My education and skills in quality improvement allow

me to learn from everyone I work with and help improve the experience of staff, patients and families,” says Nishita.

Now, she supports teams with Quality Improvement (QI) initiatives, primarily in the hospital inpatient units, Environmental Services and Food and Nutrition Services, by testing, measuring, implementing and sustaining changes through improvement cycles. One of her favourite things about her work is when teams come together. “In the inpatient units, I have the fortune of participating in performance and idea board huddles. I’m so happy to learn from teams about their QI initiatives.”

If given the chance to guide someone in a similar role, she says, “Make data your friend. When testing and implementing changes, measure the changes to know if you are on the right track.”

We thank Nishita, the entire Quality Improvement team and all of our dedicated staff for their tremendous work.

Innovation Adoption in Action



Earlier this year, Cyrelle Muskat, Director of Quality Systems and Wellness in the Apotex, brought an innovative technology to the Baycrest Innovation Office (BIO). The technology was Obie for Seniors, or Obie, and the question was whether it would be helpful in engaging residents. The Obie device projects games onto a surface such as a tabletop, and creates a virtual playground that provides cognitive stimulation, stimulates social engagement and even encourages physical movement.

After contacting the vendor and obtaining a couple of demo devices, the team designed a pilot to determine the actual impact of the Obie technology. Led by the Apotex fifth floor

recreationist, Sabina Ntim, the Obie pilot was launched in the West neighbourhood. In fact, as part of the assessment and evaluation process, all the unit staff were involved, especially their feedback and comments on the residents’ experiences playing the Obie games.

The results were overwhelmingly positive. One staff member remarked, “It was exciting to observe the two residents interacting with each other.” Another commented, “The resident was very talkative during the games and reminisced about some childhood memories.” So much so, that the fifth floor received enough donations to purchase an Obie for each neighbourhood, and the pilot is now a scaling to other units of the Apotex.

Overall, starting from a need, an idea and a cross-collaborative approach, the Apotex was able to adopt an innovative solution to provide residents with additional new, fun, meaningful leisure and recreational experiences – an example of innovation in action.

Have an Awesome Autumn!



The Awesome Autumn campaign is here to help us all stay safe and healthy so we can make the most of this beautiful season. Watch for events throughout October and November and opportunities to receive your flu shot or COVID-19 booster dose. Staff will enjoy prizes, trivia, giveaways and more!

Upcoming Awesome Autumn activities include:

- Pumpkin Spice Social in the Silverman Garden on October 19
- GO-VAXX bus spooky celebration on October 24, when staff can receive a bivalent or Pfizer COVID-19 booster dose
- Staff raffle draws for those who have received their COVID-19 booster or their flu shot

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- The Awesome Autumn flu buggy visiting various departments

For more information or for questions, please contact Occupational Health and Safety at occupationalhealthandsafety@baycrest.org

Innovation Updates

Learn to Care with Confidence: Caregiving 101 is Baycrest@Home's Monthly Education Series for New and Veteran Caregivers



Join Baycrest@Home Social Worker and Dementia Coach Yuliya Goloida for Caregiver 101 - our monthly education series focused on learning to care for someone living with dementia. The next four-week,

eight-session course begins November 8, and runs to December 1, 2022.

Designed for spouses and adult children who are caring for a person with dementia, this course covers some caregiving fundamentals, including how to equip your home for safety and accessibility, managing medications, and dealing with challenging behaviours and activities of daily living. Course participants will hear from others in similar situations and have opportunities to share and connect while receiving tailored recommendations for their own unique caregiving experiences.

For more information, or to see upcoming course dates, visit baycrestathome.ca/member-plans/#caregiving-101.

Upcoming Caregiver Webinar: Inclusive Caregiving for 2SLGBTQI+ Older Adults - Wednesday, October 19, from noon to 1 p.m.

Join Dr. Adriana Shnall in conversation with featured panelists: Tom Warner, author, activist and Chair of Senior Pride Network; Shoshana Pellman, speaker and transactivist; and John Vigna, social worker and educator at Sunshine Centres for Seniors. Participants will gain a more in-depth awareness and understanding of 2SLGBTQI+ elders and seniors and their unique life experiences, issues,

concerns and needs. Participants will learn what they can do to support and create safer, respectful and more affirming spaces and services. **To register, go to <https://bit.ly/OctoberCaregiverWebinar>.**



Caring for Your Parent: A Caregiver Support Group Starts October 25th (8 sessions, runs weekly)



Baycrest@Home is offering a support group for adult children caring for a parent diagnosed with dementia. Participants who attend this group will receive guidance, practical tools and strategies to help cope with the experience of caregiving, a deeper understanding of the changing relationship with their parent, and peer support around the importance of self-care to build and sustain their capacity to care. Pre-registration and more information is available at <https://baycrestathome.ca/member-plans/#therapy>, 647-576-HOME (4663) or info@baycrestathome.ca.

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Baycrest is fully affiliated
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3560 Bathurst Street
Toronto | ON | M6A 2E1
416 785 2500 | www.baycrest.org

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marketing@baycrest.org