

NETWORK NEWSLETTER

A CHRONIC PAIN NETWORK UPDATE



INSIDE

A Message from the Scientific Director

An update from
Dr. Norm Buckley.

Page 2

Examining Rapid Learning Health Systems

McMaster Health Forum brings stakeholders together for a Deliberative Dialogue

Page 2

A Slight Change in Plans

Rescheduling the Chronic Pain Network's 2020 Annual Meeting due to COVID-19

Page 3

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

Learn a little more about the day and what the Chronic Pain Network did to celebrate it.

Page 4

Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research



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A message from the Scientific Director

Network updates from Dr. Norman Buckley



Little did we know, when we sat down to pick the date of our next annual meeting, what the state of the world would be like just a handful of months later.

To say that our lives have changed in the last few months would be

an understatement. Yes, it is true that the world has changed, but the world has changed before. And it will, no doubt, change again. What is important to remember is that we all have the ability to help determine how it changes.

Each day, we are now bombarded with messages of things we cannot do - don't leave your home more than you have to. Don't stand too closely to other people. Don't gather in groups of more than five. And, perhaps the most important one, don't forget to wash your hands.

Those are all pretty important things to remember when trying to make our way through this trying time, but there are also some other "don'ts" that you should remember as well. Don't be afraid to smile. Don't be afraid to wave to a neighbour. Don't be afraid

to pick up the phone to call a parent, a child, a sibling, an aunt, an uncle or a friend just to check in. Don't be afraid to offer support to others and don't be afraid to accept it in return. Also, don't be afraid to laugh.

We hope that the regular activities of life will can start to resume in the next few months and that we will look at the stranger walking down the street with kindness instead of concern that they're at risk of encroaching on our six foot radius. But, for now, our focus should be on doing what we can and helping who we can so that we all get through this together.

McMaster Health Forum Holds a Deliberative Dialogue

Examining Rapid Learning Health Systems

The McMaster Health Forum held a Stakeholder's Deliberative Dialogue on February 20, 2020 to discuss Rapid Learning Health Systems and the application in health conditions which may for several reasons be under-represented in the policy arena. The Dialogue was sponsored by the Imagine SPOR Chronic GI Disease network, with in kind support from the Chronic Pain Network and ChildBright.

Rapid Learning Health Systems refers to the systematic incorporation of up to date knowledge in the development and implementation of health care policy. According to the McMaster Health Forum website, "Creating rapid-learning health systems offers the potential to: (1) 'move the dial' for patients in their experiences and outcomes in rapid-improvement cycles; (2) enable data- and evidence-

informed transformations at all levels of a health system; (3) motivate greater collaboration among, and enable greater impacts of (and returns on investments in), all elements of the research system; and (4) better leverage quality-improvement and other learning and improvement infrastructures operating at the interface between the health and research systems."

In this way RLHS represents a form of patient engagement in Health policy with a formal structure to the process. The Dialogue brought together a range of individuals including patient partners, clinicians, policymakers and advocates from the fields of pain, gastrointestinal disorders and child development across the country. The discussion addressed a series of questions including barriers to implementing the RLHS process,

reasons why some 'under-resourced' or under recognized clinical areas might be more or less well positioned to make use of these processes, and how the relationship between policy making and research may be fundamentally different in ways which makes it difficult for the research process to address the needs of policy in a timely fashion. More background is and will become available through the McMaster Health Forum website. The proceedings will be published including the background Evidence Brief and Citizen Brief documents. Until then, there are a number of excellent resources available on the RLHS at the McMaster Forum website.

<https://www.mcmasterforum.org/>

A Slight Change in Plans: Rescheduling our Annual Meeting due to COVID-19

Sometimes, in spite of countless hours of hard work and planning, things just don't work out as intended. This is the case for both the Chronic Pain Network's Annual Meeting and the Canadian Pain Society's Annual Scientific Meeting, among many others.

With COVID-19 quickly spreading throughout the country, face-to-face meetings have not only become logistical nightmares, they've also become a health risk. With the safety and wellbeing of participants to think of, a change in approach became necessary.

Thanks to the wonders of technology, though face-to-face meetings may no longer be able to take place, details are being worked out in the hopes of offering components of the original

meetings through the use of interactive online webinars that include opportunity for discussions.

The Chronic Pain Network's Knowledge Translation committee is working to arrange a three-part webinar series that approaches knowledge translation from different viewpoints - from a policy perspective, a research perspective and a patient perspective. It is the committee's intention to hold the first webinar in late May or early June and record the sessions so that those who are unable to attend don't miss out.

The Clinical Research Network and Steering committee will also meet using the video conferencing platform Zoom.

While this is not the way we envisioned

the meeting taking place, we are fortunate to live in a time where technology allows us to span vast distances and come together remotely when physically meeting just isn't an option.

The Chronic Pain Network would also like to recognize the efforts of all those involved with the planning of the Canadian Pain Society's Annual Scientific Meeting. Those involved did a wonderful job putting together a fascinating programme, with a high level of patient representation in many of the panel presentations, as well as general attendance.

Though this year's meeting will not be taking place as originally planned, we look forward to seeing you when the opportunity presents itself once again.

Tips from Canadian Astronaut Chris Hadfield on How to Cope During Times of Social Distancing

Humans are social creatures by nature - though some certainly more than others. However, these days, when the term "social distancing" seems to be on the tip of everyone's tongue, even the most introverted of us all may find themselves yearning for a little human interaction.

But what do we do when keeping physical distance from others is imperative to our health? How do individuals maintain mental and emotional wellbeing while taking drastic measures to ensure their physical wellbeing?

"Confined spaces are almost entirely psychological," said astronaut Chris Hadfield in an interview with CBC. "If you think of your normal life, you don't travel infinitely every single day. There are very specific, confined, repeatable things you do every single day. You just get used to that as being normal, so, when the normal shifts, suddenly you feel sort of disrupted or maybe confined," Hadfield explained. "I think the real thing to do is just look at the reality of where you are and the opportunities that you have, and the way you can still be productive and interact and mentally stimulated, and just go with that. Stop worrying that it's different, and, instead, go with the reality of the new set of rules that you're living under."

Hadfield knows a thing or two about what it's like to live in

confined spaces, with limited human contact, for extended periods of time. He spent five months on the International Space Station, serving as commander, in addition to taking part in several space flights.

Hadfield pointed out that there wasn't any Internet or social media during his first space flight, but, by the time his third space flight came around, he could reach a billion people with just the push of a button. "You can pick up your phone and dial ten numbers, and talk to anyone in north America effortlessly."

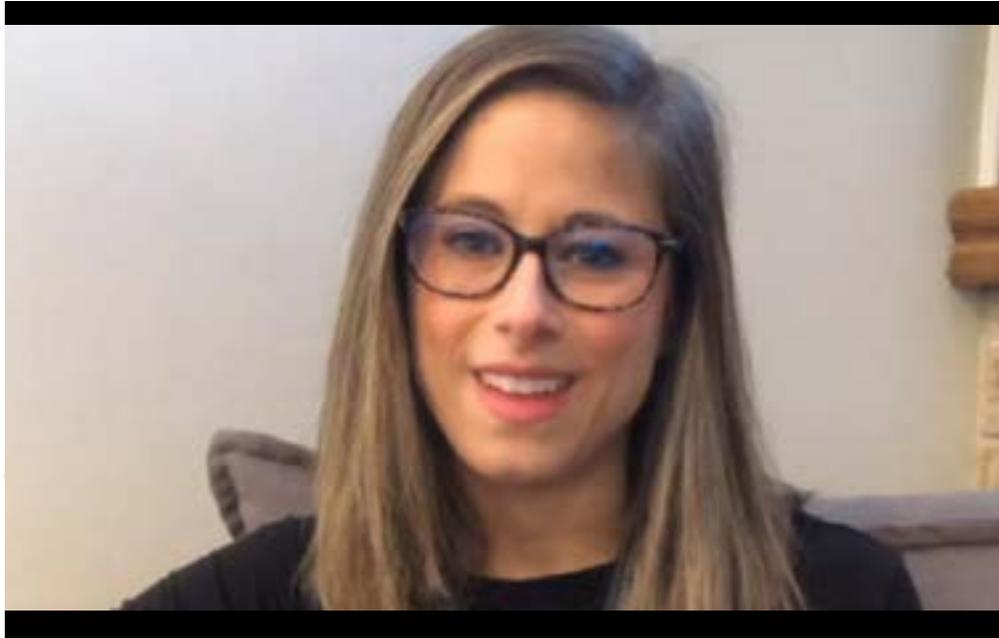
In a two minute video posted to his YouTube channel, Hadfield gives tips for four steps to take when faced with isolation: identify and learn about the risk that you are facing right now, determine what your objectives are, identify your constraints, and then take action.

"There's never been a better time to self-isolate," said Hadfield. "So many people have access to the Internet. You have the entire written work of everything - all body of knowledge right there at your finger tips."

You can watch the CBC interview with Chris Hadfield [here](#), or check out his YouTube channel [here](#).

International Day of Women & Girls in Science

The Chronic Pain Network Celebrates Women in Science



Chronic Pain Network primary investigators Renée El-Gabalawy, Melanie Noel, Karine Toupin-April and Jennifer Stinson took part in International Day of Women and Girls in Science by participating in video interviews for a social media campaign.

Marie Curie, Elizabeth Blackwell, Barbara McClintock and Katherine Johnson are just a few names known for their contributions in history. They also all happen to be women. Though women have made many historically significant contributions in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the reality is that they are still severely underrepresented, worldwide, in these fields.

On December 22, 2015, an annual International Day to recognize the critical role women and girls play in science and technology communities was established and February 11th of each year was proclaimed International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

In recognition of this important day, and in celebration the contributions of its own Network-affiliated women in science, the Chronic Pain Network recorded videos with some of its principal investigators to find out a little bit more them, what inspires them, and what advice they have to give the next generation of women in the STEM fields.

Their answers were compiled into five quick videos that were then posted on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube and had great engagement.

You can view them at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfcW6HmBmZlIOxdclcz31Z7YDEnTxY1c>

Coming Events

Who: Work Wellness Institute
What: Managing Stress During COVID-19
When: April 9, 2020
Time: 12:30 PM ET
Where: Online

Visit <https://workwellnessinstitute.org/webinars/> for additional details.

Who: Work Wellness Institute
What: Remote Working During a Health Crisis: What Works?
When: April 14, 2020
Time: 12 noon ET
Where: Online

Visit <https://workwellnessinstitute.org/webinars/> for additional details.

Who: IASP
What: IASP World Congress
When: June 27 - July 1, 2021
Where: Amsterdam

For additional details visit:
<https://www.iaspworldcongress.org/attend/registration-rates>

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