



SASKATCHEWAN POPULATION HEALTH AND EVALUATION RESEARCH UNIT



**ANNUAL REVIEW**

**2014-2015**

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*History of Health Inequities*

*Governor General's Award*

*Residential school*

*Fulbright Canada*

*Alumni award*

*ICCC award*

*BIC Conference*

*Saskatchewan Archives Board*

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## WHO WE ARE

SPHERU is an interdisciplinary, bi-university unit at the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina, founded in 1999 to promote health equity through innovative, timely, policy-relevant research. Our researchers come from a variety of academic backgrounds including geography, political science, anthropology, epidemiology, social work, kinesiology, and nutrition. During 2014-15, the unit included the 13-member research team, two post doctoral fellows, 11 core administrative and project staff, and 38 research staff and trainees. Researchers work from one of three SPHERU sites: at the main campus of the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina, and at the University of Regina Prince Albert campus.

SPHERU has built a national profile and is well-known as one of a handful of research units in Canada where population health research is advanced. SPHERU conducts intervention research to address issues of health inequity among vulnerable populations. A particular strength within SPHERU is our expertise in knowledge translation, using integrated and innovative KT strategies to ensure findings from our research make their way to policy makers at both the government and community level. SPHERU's research can be found across the continuum of care and across the province, contributing to the priority areas of prevention and service integration.

Our mission – the promotion of health equity by understanding and addressing population health disparities through policy-relevant research – is incorporated into all of our projects. SPHERU's work includes the following types of research:

- Creation of new knowledge;
- Independent policy analysis;
- Collaborative research with communities;
- Collaborative research with policy makers; and
- Evaluations of policies, programs, and interventions.

## FUNDERS

SPHERU receives funding from a variety of sources. While its two university partners provide in-kind support, the majority of SPHERU's funding comes in the form of project-specific grants from provincial and federal health research funding agencies. Key among these are the Phase III Health Research Group Grant from the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) and operating grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) held by one or more researchers affiliated with the unit. As well, SPHERU has been awarded smaller grants from a number of sources that support conferences, knowledge translation, training, project development, and other activities. SPHERU undertakes contract research on behalf of governments and non-governmental agencies that align with the unit's overall mission, and also conducts program evaluations in the area of population health. All of these sources of funding combine to support the work of the unit.



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

## PARTNERS

Health research is a major focus for the University of Regina, with world-class researchers conducting leading-edge studies in aging, long-term care, pain assessment and management, cancer research, population health, rehabilitation and risk reduction, rural health, and northern health. Work at the University of Regina includes a multidisciplinary study of the impact of health determinants on various populations, as well as research on policy and program interventions designed to improve these determinants and provide equitable access to health services. Through the provision of funding and office space in both Prince Albert and Regina, the University of Regina continues to support SPHERU in its work to produce high-quality, policy-relevant research.

University  
of Regina



UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

The University of Saskatchewan, through its involvement with SPHERU, is helping to redefine the way people think about health determinants and to chart new territory by actively engaging communities, non-governmental organizations, and policy makers in the research enterprise. With a wide range of health science colleges and programs, the University of Saskatchewan is committed to expanding health research. The university is home to SPHERU's Saskatoon-based researchers and staff. This relationship, along with an association with the College of Medicine, affords SPHERU opportunities to expand its research and achieve its goals.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

Transition and transformation are recurring themes in these annual messages. They remain current and relevant, and centred in a mature and committed team. The anthropologist in me finds this very exciting as it signals the dynamic, vital culture we have in SPHERU.

We are happy to welcome some new folks, and thank those who have moved on to other opportunities. Dr. Gordon McKay is a wonderful addition to our Management Advisory Group. We also have two new Post Doctoral Fellows, Dr. Amanada Lavallee and Dr. Andrew Hatala. You can meet all three in this report.

Our core values around social justice remain focused in our long-standing mission to promote population health equity. This is reflected in our interdisciplinary research and our communications. As you will see in this report, SPHERU is a really exciting place to be. Twice a year our team meetings are filled with stimulating discussions on the landscape of possibilities as we move forward collectively.

Finally, thanks to co-Director, Dr. Tom McIntosh. I was very happy to lean on the experience of my University of Regina counterpart. Our joint occupation of this position truly underscores the significance of the bi-university relationship in our success, and creates a space for us to transcend affiliations and get down to our collective research passions and interests. I can't wait to see what comes next.



Sylvia Abonyi, PhD  
Interim Director, SPHERU

I could not agree more with Sylvia's observation that change and transformation are a constant at SPHERU. Luckily for us, that change has almost always been a positive thing for the unit and for the researchers.

And it has been a year of change at the University of Regina as well and one that I think bodes well for the future of the unit's research. An intense university-wide consultation process created a new strategic plan that identified five "research clusters" that exemplify the best of what the university does. One of those clusters is "Health Equity" of which SPHERU is a key component. SPHERU's commitment to engaged community-based research into population health interventions aimed at improving health outcomes for marginalized populations is central to the promotion of health equity.

My hope is that the emphasis on the research clusters will provide SPHERU with opportunities to expand and build relationships with researchers that share our core values around social justice. This can only strengthen the unit's presence in the province and at both universities.

In keeping with the theme of mutual admiration, I want to thank Sylvia for assuming the role of Director this past year. Her commitment to collaboration and consensus-building exemplifies the best of SPHERU's tradition.



Tom McIntosh, PhD  
Associate Director, SPHERU

# MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

As a bi-university research group, SPHERU is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. The MOU, which has been renewed for 2014-2019, outlines the cooperative agreement of the partner institutions to support the work of SPHERU and is operationalized through a Management Advisory Group (MAG). SPHERU's co-directors meet twice a year with the MAG to provide updates on the group's research and financial activities and to seek advice and support for the unit. MAG members are senior university administrators who are appointed by the Vice-Presidents Research at both universities.

## MAG members for 2014-2015:



**Dr. M.E. (Beth) Horsburgh** is Associate Vice-President Research-Health at the University of Saskatchewan and Vice-President Research & Innovation at the Saskatoon Health Region. A member of both the Office of the Vice-President Research Executive Committee at the University of Saskatchewan and the Senior Leadership Team of the Saskatoon Health Region, she is a key participant in strategic planning related to health research at both the Saskatoon Health Region and the University of Saskatchewan.

**Dr. David Malloy** is Vice-President (Research) at the University of Regina and a professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology & Health Studies. His research focuses upon applied ethics and philosophy in administrative contexts. His interests include ethical decision-making, codes of ethics, leadership, and ethical climate/culture.



**Dr. Gordon McKay** is Professor Emeritus at the University of Saskatchewan, Acting Vice-Dean of Research in the College of Medicine, and the current director of the Core MS laboratory. He is a special advisor to the Office of the Vice President of Research in the areas of clinical and biomedical health and Chair of the Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation.

**Dr. Harold Riemer** is the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. A graduate of the University of Alberta and Eastern Washington University, he holds a PhD in sport management from Ohio State University, with a major focus on organization theory and behaviour.



## RESEARCHERS



### ***SYLVIA ABONYI, PHD***

Dr. Abonyi is an anthropologist working primarily in the area of Indigenous health. She explores the role of culture in health through a number of research projects in northern and remote areas of Saskatchewan and across the Prairies. She is currently interim director of SPHERU and an associate professor with the University of Saskatchewan's Community Health and Epidemiology Department.

### ***JAMES DASCHUK, PHD***

Dr. Daschuk is an historian with a background in anthropology and Canadian studies. He has been researching and teaching in the field of Indigenous health for nearly twenty years, and is working on the SPHERU team project analyzing the history of health inequities in Saskatchewan. He is an associate professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina.



### ***RACHEL ENGLER-STRINGER, PHD***

Dr. Engler-Stringer is an assistant professor in Community Health and Epidemiology at the University of Saskatchewan. Her research interests include food systems and food security, food environment interventions, nutritional health inequities, and health promotion. Currently, she is Principal Investigator of two CIHR-funded studies examining the opening of a full service grocery store in a former food desert and a mixed methods critical ethnographic study of food access in the inner city of Saskatoon.

### ***PAUL HACKETT, PHD***

Dr. Hackett's interests focus on the impact of cultural change on community health. His research includes type 2 diabetes among First Nations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and the history of tuberculosis among western First Nations. He is also team lead on the SPHERU project looking at the origins and import of health inequities in Saskatchewan. He is an assistant professor with the University of Saskatchewan's Department of Geography and Planning.



### ***BONNIE JEFFERY, PHD***

Dr. Jeffery has been a researcher with SPHERU since 2000 and served as Director from 2006-2012. She is a professor with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina based out of the Faculty's campus in Prince Albert. Dr. Jeffery has had extensive experience in conducting population health research with rural, remote, and northern communities. Her current research program focuses on population health intervention research to support healthy aging in place for rural seniors.



### ***SHANTHI JOHNSON, PHD***

Dr. Johnson is a professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. Her work covers epidemiological research related to the surveillance and monitoring of falls and fall-related injuries among seniors, and intervention research on the understanding of the underlying mechanisms associated with falls among seniors in community and long-term care settings. She is currently a visiting Fulbright Canada scholar at the Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging, University of South Florida.

### ***DIANE MARTZ, PHD***

Dr. Martz works in the area of rural women's health with a focus on the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of rural health. She is an associate professor with the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Saskatchewan, and Director, International Research and Partnerships.



### ***TOM MCINTOSH, PHD***

Dr. McIntosh brings expertise on public policy making, and knowledge transfer and exchange to numerous SPHERU projects, most notably his work on the political and economic components of SPHERU's historical analysis of population health in Saskatchewan. He is a professor and head of the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Regina, as well as associate director of SPHERU.

### ***NAZEEM MUHAJARINE, PHD***

Dr. Muhajarine is a professor, Community Health and Epidemiology, University of Saskatchewan, and leads SPHERU's Healthy Children research program. His research includes community and family contextual influences (neighbourhood effects) in child development and health, risk in the prenatal period, and developing community-university research partnerships to improve knowledge creation, transfer, and application. For 2014-2015 he is the interim executive director, School of Public Health, at the University of Saskatchewan



### ***NUELLE NOVIK, PHD***

Dr. Novik is an associate professor with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina. Her research interests include the social determinants of health and equity, rural and remote practice in health and social services, aging and seniors, mental health, community-based research, and palliative care and bereavement. She works with the Healthy Aging in Place project.



**SARAH OOSMAN, PHD**

Dr. Oosman is a physiotherapist and an assistant professor at the School of Physical Therapy, University of Saskatchewan. She works in the area of health promotion with a specific interest in community-based health intervention research in partnership with First Nation and Métis communities. She is interested in culture-based health promotion programs to influence health across the lifespan.

**NAZMI SARI, PHD**

Dr. Sari is a health economist with specific research interests in quality and efficiency issues in hospital markets, provider reimbursements and health care financing reforms, and the economics of smoking and physical activity. He is a professor in the Department of Economics with the University of Saskatchewan.



## RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



**CORY NEUDORF, MD**

Dr. Neudorf is an assistant professor in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology at the University of Saskatchewan and Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Saskatoon Health Region. In this role, he collaborated with SPHERU to produce the *Healthy Families, Healthy Communities* report and is also studying health inequities for SPHERU.

## POST DOCTORAL FELLOWS

**ANDREW HATALA, PHD**

Dr. Andrew Hatala is a Canadian Institutes of Health Research post doctoral fellow in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. Working under the direction of Dr. Sylvia Abonyi, he is conducting a community-based research project to identify strategies of resilience and mental health among inner-city Indigenous youth.



**AMANDA LAVALLEE, PHD**

Dr. Amanda LaVallee is a post doctoral fellow in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. She is working under the direction of Dr. Sylvia Abonyi and Dr. Sarah Oosman on the research project, *Wuskiwiw-tan! (Let's Move!): Aging well in a northern Saskatchewan Métis Community*.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROJECT STAFF

### **COLLEEN HAMILTON**

Colleen has been with SPHERU since 2002 at the Prince Albert site. She currently is SPHERU's administrative coordinator, overseeing financial and administrative activities at both institutions.

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### **JILL ARKLES**

Jill joined in 2013 as project coordinator on an evaluation of the implementation of Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative physical activity projects. She left in early 2015 to join the Sexual Health Centre Saskatoon.

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### **JUANITA BACSU**

Juanita has been project coordinator with SPHERU's historical health and Healthy Aging in Place projects since 2009. She is completing her PhD in Community Health and Epidemiology at the University of Saskatchewan.

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### **SHARIANNE CAFFET**

Sharianne recently joined SPHERU and is based at the Regina office, where she coordinates Dr. Shanthi Johnson's falls prevention research program.

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### **MIKE CHOUINARD**

Mike started with SPHERU in 2010 as managing editor of the Healthy Children project website for kidSKAN. In 2011 his role expanded to include SPHERU's KT activities as Communications Officer.

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### **DIANA FEDOSOFF**

Diana has been a member of SPHERU since 2002. As project coordinator for Dr. Sylvia Abonyi, she manages the administrative, financial, and research activities on a number of projects.

### **TRACY RIDALLS**

Tracy has been a project coordinator at SPHERU since 2009. She manages a number of projects, including Smart Cities, Healthy Kids; Seasonality and Active Saskatoon Kids; and the Supporting Healthy Aging through Walkable Built Environment project.

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### **TARA TODD**

Tara joined SPHERU as a research assistant in 2011 and continued to work in Regina as research secretary and project coordinator with the Healthy Aging in Place project until September 2014 when she left to continue her studies.

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### **CAROLYN TRAN**

Carolyn works at the Saskatoon campus, coordinating community research activities with the Healthy Aging in Place project. She is also completing her Master's degree in Social Work with the University of Regina.

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### **JESSICA TRAWIN**

Jessica joined SPHERU as research secretary starting in 2011, to provide administrative and financial support to the unit at the Saskatoon office. She left in September 2014 to pursue her studies.

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### **JEFFREY WALTERS**

Jeffrey works at the Regina campus, coordinating community research activities with the Healthy Aging in Place research project. He is also completing his PhD in Social Studies at the University of Regina.

## RESEARCH STAFF AND TRAINEES

Thilina Bandara – Research Assistant (PhD)  
Silvia Bermedo-Carrasco – Research Coordinator  
Joanne Blythe – Administrative Assistant  
Janice Braden – Prof Research Associate  
Tyson Brittain – Research Assistant  
Melanie Brockman – Research Officer  
Michael Chmielewski – Research Assistant (undergrad)  
Jennifer Donlevy – Research Assistant  
Melissa Gan – Research Assistant  
Hilary Gough – Research Assistant  
Margot Gough – Research Coordinator  
Brianna Groot – Research Coordinator  
Sabyasachi Gupta – Research Coordinator  
Amanda Guthrie – Research Assistant  
Joel Heitmar – Research Assistant  
Nadine Janzen – Research Assistant (undergrad)  
Andrea Kohle – Research Coordinator  
Stuart Lockhart – Research Assistant  
Larisa Lotoski – Research Assistant (PhD)  
Swati Madan – Research Assistant (PhD)  
Maggie McBride – Research Assistant



*Sabyasachi Gupta and Sharianne Caffet*



*Juanita Bacsu and Carolyn Tran*

Katherine McLeod – Research Assistant (PhD)  
Kathleen McMullin – Research Assistant  
Joshua Neudorf – Research Assistant  
Chinenye Nwoke – Research Assistant (Master's)  
Joy Pader – Research Assistant  
Terri Paulson – Research Assistant (Master's)  
Tamara Pearl – Research Assistant  
Tracy Ridalls – Research Coordinator  
Claudia Ruppitsch – Research Assistant  
Thomas Roy – Research Assistant  
Andrea Scerbe – Research Coordinator (Master's)  
Jacinda Sigurdson – Research Assistant (Master's)  
Duvaraga Sivajohanathan – Research Assistant  
Kelley Thackeray – Research Assistant  
Lisa Thurairasu – Research Assistant  
Tara Todd – Research Coordinator  
Carolyn Tran – Research Assistant (Master's)  
Paul Tuhin – Research Assistant (PhD)  
Jeffrey Walters – Research Assistant (PhD)  
Sugandhi Wickremarachchi – Research Assistant (Master's)  
Hazel Williams-Roberts – Research Assistant (PhD)

## WHAT WE DO

SPHERU's work includes the creation of new knowledge, independent policy analysis, collaborative research with policy makers, and collaboration with communities to develop strategies to reduce health inequities. Our research falls within the following areas:

- Northern and Indigenous Health
- Healthy Children
- Rural Health
- History of Health Inequities
- Intervention Research

Our researchers take a collaborative approach to population health research by working with communities and policy makers. This approach includes mobilizing and building upon the expertise of our researchers, students, trainees, and research partners; ensuring our research questions and results are relevant to improving the health of Saskatchewan residents; and exchanging our research knowledge through engagement with communities and policy makers.

## NORTHERN AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Globally, Indigenous peoples face poorer overall health outcomes and continue to experience disparities disproportionately across most social and health indicators when compared with other populations. At the same time, many Indigenous peoples and communities are characterized by incredible resilience and a growing capacity internally for addressing these inequities.

SPHERU's work in Northern and Indigenous Health is grounded in this global context and a community-driven, participatory approach towards identifying and approaching issues of relevance. In addition to research projects and evaluation contracts that focus exclusively on Northern and Indigenous health, many of the SPHERU projects outlined in our other theme areas include Indigenous people and communities.



## HEALTHY CHILDREN



Children's early experiences affect not only their individual long-term health and well-being but that of society as a whole.

Evidence has shown that in addition to factors like age, sex, and genetics, the contexts in which children grow – family, neighbourhoods, broader environments – have powerful effects on children's health and well-being. Recent studies of child health outcomes are finding children could be more deeply affected by social, economic, or other factors, alone and in combination with genetic factors, than was previously understood.

SPHERU's work in the area of Healthy Children currently focuses on two lines of inquiry. First, studies continue to tease apart and seek a deeper understanding of how various contexts – family, neighbourhood social and physical environments, schools – play a crucial role in determining the health and development of children. Second, other studies continue to investigate how community- and population-level interventions focusing on children and families impact the intended and unintended outcomes.

## HISTORY OF HEALTH INEQUITIES



Saskatchewan has historically shown some of the most extreme health outcome disparities in Canada, especially when comparing First Nations with non-Indigenous populations, or rural with urban populations.

SPHERU is looking at a range of historical data collections to understand how health changed over the course of the twentieth century, how it varied between communities, and how the lessons of the past could assist modern policy makers to reduce health inequities. For example, as part of our work, we have been studying body mass index (BMI) data from residential schools and how this might explain current inequities for Indigenous people when it comes to outcomes such as the incidence of type 2 diabetes and how this has changed over time.

## RURAL HEALTH

Despite urbanization, much of Saskatchewan's population still lives in rural areas, which have been affected by economic restructuring in farming and forestry, young people moving away, deteriorating infrastructure, and restructuring of health and education services.

Government cutbacks in health and social services have led to the decline of primary services, and in turn have forced communities to look to community groups and residents to provide care and services to a population that is aging. One result of these developments is that rural people's health status is relatively poor when compared with that of people in urban communities.

A key approach to our work is that SPHERU research is not simply conducted on rural communities but is done in partnership with these communities. This approach focuses on the importance we place on research and action that can bring about change, especially in developing programs and policies that can support healthy aging for rural seniors.



## INTERVENTION RESEARCH

SPHERU conducts intervention research to address issues of health inequity among vulnerable populations with a focus on children, rural seniors, and northern and Indigenous populations. This work involves evaluations of existing policies and programs, integrates interventions within research projects, and uses iterative and innovative knowledge translation strategies to ensure that findings from our research make their way to policy makers at multiple levels of governance.

Our Healthy Children program of research is, for example, informing interventions in Saskatoon's built environment to support physical activity among children, while our rural work identifies interventions and service integration to support healthy aging in place for seniors throughout Saskatchewan.



# KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

SPHERU brings researchers together in an environment that promotes and supports collaboration among academics and between academic and community partners. Researchers developing projects are able to draw on their colleagues' disciplinary expertise, experience, and relationships with other researchers, policy makers, and community members.

SPHERU's knowledge translation and exchange activities are an integral part of our collaboratively driven research strategy. We begin by identifying potential users of research and involve them throughout the process. Our knowledge translation and exchange strategies include:

- Publishing research findings in accessible, plain language documents;
- Using new media to share findings;
- Developing toolkits of findings for communities to use as resources;
- Developing research networks for knowledge exchange; and
- Delivering and participating in presentations, forums, and expert dialogues.



Dr. Bonnie Jeffery and U of R Press publisher Bruce Walsh

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## DASCHUK BOOK WINS GOVERNOR GENERAL'S HISTORY AWARD



The honours have continued for Dr. James Daschuk's book, *Clearing The Plains*, which examines the history of disease, starvation, and loss of Indigenous life on the Prairies, as well as how politics and the federal government, particularly under Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, played a role.

In November 2014, Daschuk received the Governor General's History Award for Scholarly Research (Sir John A. Macdonald Prize) from Gov. Gen. David Johnston during a ceremony at Rideau Hall.

The University of Regina Press book has won or been shortlisted for several other awards, generated enormous media attention, and sold more than 10,000 copies.

## HEALTHY AGING IN PLACE: IMPROVING RURAL SENIORS' HEALTH THROUGH POLICY AND COMMUNITY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

As the Healthy Aging in Place project has moved into its next phase, the team has produced a range of knowledge translation work this past year. In March, the team again made presentations at the Aging in American Conference in Chicago, focusing on brain health and rural aging, healthy older adults' perceptions, myths and meanings of brain health, key practices and interventions, and access to information.

In February, the team launched the new phase's first study: a three-month exercise intervention program for seniors with the partner communities aimed at supporting mobility and enhancing social interaction among seniors.

In the fall of 2014, the team made a presentation at the Community-Based Research Showcase at the University of Regina with a poster outlining the Healthy Aging in Place work between 2011 between 2014. They gave one oral and two poster presentations at the 7th International Symposium: Safety and Health and Agricultural and Rural Populations: Global Perspectives in Saskatoon (SHARP 2014). As well, the team published an article, "Policy, community and kin: Interventions that support rural healthy aging," in *Activities, Adaptation and Aging*, 38 (2), 138-155.

After the latest SHRF Phase Three Group Grant was announced in spring 2014, the project received media attention, including an interview of Dr. Bonnie Jeffery on John Gormley's CKOM radio show. The discussion focused on issues such as health services, housing, ease of movement within communities, and access to information.



## HACKETT INTERVIEWED FOR LANCET ARTICLE



Dr. Paul Hackett was interviewed for an article in *The Lancet* (Vol. 3, No. 5, p.319, May 2015) about our historical research looking into the social determinants of health for Indigenous people. The article by Angela Pirisi, published earlier online, looks at the health disparities for Indigenous people in Canada and focuses on different research across the country.

Other historical work included a presentation by Hackett and Dr. Sylvia Abonyi in November at Fredericton's Canadian Association for Physical Anthropology conference that focused on historical data on body mass index from residential school students. The same month, Hackett spoke in Toronto about the incidence of tuberculosis in residential schools.

## FOOD ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH



Dr. Rachel Engler-Stringer and Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine co-authored three papers on food environments this past year: a look at geographic access to healthy and unhealthy food sources in *Spatial and Spatio-temporal Epidemiology* (August 2014); a systematic review on community and consumer food environments regarding children's diets in *BMC Public Health* (May 2014); and an examination in *Preventative Medicine Reports* (March 2015) of food purchasing patterns at a grocery store in a former food desert.

In the fall, the Smart Cities, Healthy Kids food environment team hosted a workshop in Saskatoon with representatives from school, health, city, and community organizations to discuss study findings and prioritize draft recommendations.

Other knowledge translation work included poster presentations at the Canadian Public Health Association's Student & Early Career Research Forum in Toronto, and the Canadian Society of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Student Conference in Hamilton in May 2014.

## FULBRIGHT CANADA SCHOLAR

Named one of 11 Fulbright Canada scholars, Dr. Shanthi Johnson is expanding on her intervention research to reduce falls among seniors. She is working with the Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging at the University of South Florida where she will examine nutrition- and food-related policies in seniors' homes in addition to falls and injury prevention policies within the active aging framework in Florida and Saskatchewan.

Fulbright Canada's mandate is to promote mutual understanding between Canada and the United States by providing support for individuals to conduct research, lecture, or enrol in formal academic programs in the other country.



## JOURNEYS IN COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

SPHERU and the Community-University Institute for Social Research at the University of Saskatchewan collaborated on *Journeys in Community-Based Research*, released in spring 2014 (See photo, page 16) by University of Regina Press. SPHERU's Dr. Bonnie Jeffery and Dr. Diane Martz co-edited the book with Isobel M. Findlay and Louise Clarke. The book includes contributions from past and present SPHERU researchers and staff, including Jeffery, Martz, Dr. Ron Labonte, Juanita Bacsu, Dr. Mary Hampton, Dr. Gloria DeSantis, Dr. Hongxia Shan, Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine, Dr. Pammla Petrucka and Fleur Macqueen Smith.

*Journeys in Community-Based Research* examines the ethics, advocacy, and impacts of this research, and provides real-life case studies of CBR between academic researchers and partners in Indigenous, urban, and rural communities. It concludes with a synthesis of emerging CBR themes as well as the challenges faced by community and academic partners alike.



## MUHAJARINE WINS ALUMNI AWARD



SPHERU's Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine was honoured in September by his alma mater, the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The university's School of Public Health and Health Sciences (SPHHS) chose him for its SPHHS Award for Significant Contributions to the field of public health and the health sciences.

The award is given to an alumnus for outstanding achievement. The SPHHS cited his work to build strong relationships between university, community, and government in order to create healthy communities. It also noted that his findings have already made significant impact on local school and health systems in Saskatchewan.

## JOHNSON RECEIVES ICCA AWARD

The Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce honoured Dr. Shanthi Johnson for her work by choosing her as the 2014 Female Professional of the Year. She received her award during a ceremony in Toronto in June. The awards promote trade and commerce between India and Canada and recognize the achievements of Indo-Canadians from all across the country. She was recognized because of her research in the field of aging as well as her work to promote Canada-India linkages.



## EVALUATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN'S FASD-RELATED SERVICES

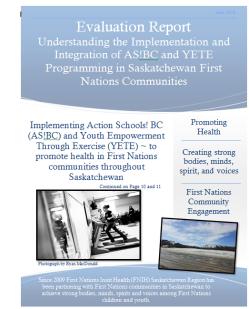


Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine and the SPHERU team produced a report, *Evaluation of the Government of Saskatchewan's FASD-Related Services: Cognitive Disabilities Consultants and Community-Based Support Programs*, which evaluates services and supports for Saskatchewan people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and their families.

The document was part of a comprehensive provincial review of programming for people with FASD and autism spectrum, and their families. In 2013-14, the Ministry of Health contracted SPHERU and two other consultants to evaluate a number of programs throughout the province, such as the Cognitive Disabilities Strategy (CDS) and regional Cognitive Disabilities Consultants (CDCs).

## HEALTH CANADA REPORT FOR EVALUATION OF AS!BC AND YETE

SPHERU produced *Evaluation Report: Understanding the Implementation and Integration of AS!BC and YETE Programming in Saskatchewan First Nations* for Health Canada (FNIH-SK). AS!BC (Action Schools! B.C.) and YETE (Youth Empowerment Through Exercise) are two health-promoting interventions to encourage healthy lifestyles for children and youth. AS!BC and YETE were implemented in 58 and 59 First Nations elementary and high schools, respectively, throughout Saskatchewan. The evaluation team, led by Dr. Sarah Oosman, provides an overview of the broad implementation evaluation framework and assesses the implementation processes. The report highlights the complex factors that influence the implementation of health promotion programs among diverse First Nations communities in Saskatchewan.



## BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD CONFERENCE



Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine and Dr. Cory Neudorf gave a presentation on their child health status report, *Healthy Families, Healthy Communities*, at the Best Interests of the Child Conference in Saskatoon in May 2014. The report examines a number of outcomes for children within the Saskatoon Health Region, most notably that many children are not ready for kindergarten when they enter the school system.

Muhajarine outlined some of SPHERU's Healthy Children research and the importance of early years investments, while Neudorf spoke to some of the findings in the report as well as its recommendations.

The conference also featured keynote presentations by Queen's University law professor Nicholas Bala, Advocate for Children and Youth Bob Pringle, and Chief Commissioner David Arnot of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

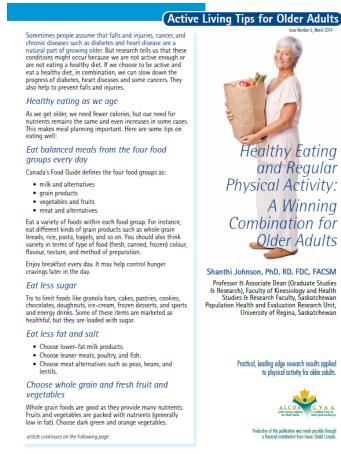
## SPHERU PRESENTS TO PHPPC

In September 2014, Dr. Sylvia Abonyi gave an overview presentation about the work of SPHERU to health professionals during Population Health Promotion Practitioners Council (PHPPC) meetings at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon. She covered SPHERU's research themes and cited numerous examples of past and present projects. Research associate Dr. Cory Neudorf also spoke to the PHPPC about research and best practices.

The meetings attracted participants from various health regions (Five Hills, Saskatoon, Regina Qu'Appelle, Cypress, Prince Albert Parkland, Prairie North, Athabasca, Mamawetan Churchill River, Kelsey Trail, and Heartland), the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority, Public Health Agency of Canada, the Ministry of Health, and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. The PHPPC meets each year for education and competency-building among members.



## HEALTHY EATING AND REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: A WINNING COMBINATION FOR OLDER ADULTS



Dr. Shanthi Johnson contributed the piece “Healthy Eating and Regular Physical Activity: A Winning Combination for Older Adults” to *Active Living Tips for Older Adults* (ALCOA) for spring 2014 (Issue No. 6).

She includes information for older adults on changing dietary needs with age, the importance of a balanced diet, recommended amounts of physical activity, changing bone and muscle mass, and activities for strength, aerobics, and balance.

The tip sheet, produced by the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults, is written in straightforward language and available in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Punjabi, and traditional and simplified Chinese.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD FORUM REPORTS

After co-hosting meetings on early learning and care in Regina and Saskatoon, SPHERU and the Muttart Foundation released two background papers, *Children and Families in the New Saskatchewan: A Discussion of Early Learning and Child Care*. These reports followed up on an earlier background paper with a focus on the stakeholder discussions during the two events.

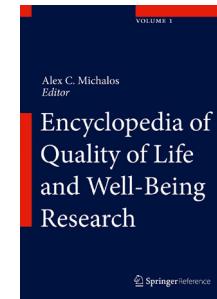
The papers outlined the key dimensions of early learning and care and included reflections from people in the field on issues such as parental engagement; frameworks for service delivery; financing, managing, and regulating; access for families; support for the workforce; public education; and clearly defined roles for government.



## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELL-BEING RESEARCH

Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine authored or co-authored several entries for the *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research* based on his SPHERU projects. The comprehensive collection is more than 7,300 pages long and was published in 2014 in twelve volumes by Springer. (The Healthy Aging in Place team also contributed an entry.) Muhajarine's entries include Neighbourhood Design and Quality of Life in Saskatoon, Health Inequities, Health Determinants, and Early Childhood Development.

Described as the first comprehensive scholarly reference work on quality of life and well-being, the publication covers subjects from a multidisciplinary perspective, including the behavioural and social sciences as well as health and healthcare. It covers basic concepts, theories, methods, biographical entries, and indicators and indexes of qualities of life.



## ASSESS, REDRESS, RE-ASSESS: ADDRESSING DISPARITIES IN RESPIRATORY HEALTH AMONG FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

Dr. Sylvia Abonyi and the Assess, Redress, Re-assess team gave several presentations at the International Symposium: Safety and Health and Agricultural and Rural Populations: Global Perspectives. SHARP 2014 took place in Saskatoon in October, as researchers, community leaders, policy-makers, and health practitioners gathered to consider the impact of global issues and challenges affecting the health and safety of rural peoples. The previous fall, a one-day symposium was held to highlight the linkages between adult and child respiratory health outcomes and housing environments in First Nations communities. A CD was produced of the 2013 presentations.

Assess, Redress, Re-assess has been working in partnership with the rural communities of Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation and Montreal Lake Cree Nation to evaluate individual and contextual factors on the outcomes of asthma, chronic bronchitis, and other respiratory conditions among people in the communities.

## SPHERU NEWS: LEARNING, ENGAGING, AND COMMUNICATING

SPHERU's newsletter is published bi-annually, during the spring and fall. It provides project activity updates, SPHERU researcher profiles and announcements, as well as information on upcoming publications and events. SPHERU News is available on our website and distributed electronically to anyone interested in learning more about population health and the social determinants of health. To subscribe to SPHERU News, please send a request to [spheru@usask.ca](mailto:spheru@usask.ca).



# SHRF RESEARCH GROUP GRANT 2014-17

**Healthy Aging in Place: Improving rural seniors' health through policy and community level interventions** builds on findings from our rural seniors' social support pilot project (2009-2010) and our previous healthy aging study (2011-2014). This work identified a number of challenges for rural seniors, including concerns about access to doctors, pharmacists, and health care services, but also factors beyond the formal health care system that can support their ability to age successfully in their communities. While there is other research on supports for seniors to "age in place," there has been little focus on seniors in rural areas.

This three-year Phase III group grant project, funded by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, will consist of three studies:

- 1) Improving Rural Seniors' Mobility and Social Interaction through Intervention Research
- 2) Supporting Healthy Aging through Walkable Built Environment
- 3) Addressing Rural Seniors' Access to Information

Through these projects, we will develop interventions that support rural older adults' ability to remain independent and live within their own homes and communities for as long as they choose. The work will emphasize community-based research and the importance of local collaboration and input from community partners in Young, Watrous, Rosetown, and Wolseley. Accordingly, preference has been given to addressing key healthy aging interventions that build on the direct perspectives from rural seniors themselves.



## SHRF Phase III Health Research Group Grant 2014 – 2017 (\$749,335)

Bonnie Jeffery, Principal Investigator; Nazeem Muhajarine, Co-Principal Investigator;  
Sylvia Abonyi, Paul Hackett, Shanthi Johnson, Diane Martz, Tom McIntosh,  
Nuelle Novik, Sarah Oosman, Co-Investigators

### ***STUDY 1: IMPROVING RURAL SENIORS' MOBILITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION THROUGH INTERVENTION RESEARCH***



Compared with urban seniors, rural seniors are more likely to experience falls and fall-related injuries, as well as social isolation and limited access to health care and related services. For this study, we will design and assess a community-based exercise intervention to support rural seniors' mobility and social interaction. We will examine the benefits and challenges of the intervention, and assess its effects on mobility and social interaction among rural seniors.

### ***STUDY 2: SUPPORTING HEALTHY AGING THROUGH WALKABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT***

Built environment and neighbourhood design play a key role in allowing seniors to age in place and remain independent. Current built environment research, however, focuses primarily on young to middle-aged adults primarily in urban settings. This study will examine the role of the rural built environment on seniors' mobility and ability to age in place. We will look at factors that support or challenge seniors' mobility, as well as how related policies and programs affect mobility.



### ***STUDY 3: ADDRESSING RURAL SENIORS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION***



Previous SPHERU research found that rural seniors' ability to age in place is significantly influenced by access to information, knowledge, and awareness of services. A lack of knowledge for seniors can result in low usage of supports and services, challenges in navigating the health system, limited awareness of preventative programs, and high hospitalization and acute care rates. For this study, we will examine where rural adults find information, which resources help them, who helps them, and how they use the Internet. We will look at rural-specific challenges and supports for accessing information, as well as successful interventions.

## AWARDED PROJECTS

Along with the SHRF group grant projects, SPHERU researchers hold grant funds as principal investigators or co-investigators on a number of projects related to our research themes. The following is a listing of some of the projects on which researchers are working, often collaboratively with others at Saskatchewan universities, as well as institutions throughout Canada and abroad.

### ***COMPARATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS FOR FALLS PREVENTION AND ACTIVE AGING***

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: SHANTHI JOHNSON (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)*

University of Regina President's Fund (\$5,000) 2014-15

The objective of this project is to establish a framework and carry out a comparative policy analysis of falls and injury-prevention policies. The first phase will involve development of a framework for analysis and dialogue from the active aging and falls/injury prevention perspective, based on existing literature and in collaboration with project partners. In the second phase a comparative policy analysis of the falls and injury-prevention policies will be conducted, in context of the active aging framework.

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### ***DEVELOPMENT OF A RURAL HEALTHY AGING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK***

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: BONNIE JEFFERY (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)*

University of Regina President's Fund (\$5,000) 2013-14

As part of Healthy Aging in Place: Improving rural and northern aboriginal seniors' health through policy and community level interventions, these funds will be used to support a graduate student to work with the research team on development of the healthy aging assessment framework. The framework will be used to support tracking the impact of the range of interventions and the linkages between them on healthy aging experiences for rural seniors.



## **FOOD ENVIRONMENTS IN CANADA: SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP**

*SPHERU RESEARCHERS: RACHEL ENGLER-STRINGER (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), NAZEEM MUHAJARINE (CO-INVESTIGATOR)*

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation Research Connections Program (\$10,000) 2014-2015

The Food Environments in Canada: Symposium and Workshop will be held in Saskatoon from May 21-23, 2015. The goal of this symposium and methodological workshop is to bring together researchers, students, and practitioners to discuss completed and ongoing studies along with the distinct strengths and challenges of Canadian food environments research, and to strategize for how to move this research forward in the future. Many researchers have voiced the need for more Canadian-specific discussions of food environments. This symposium and workshop will provide the time and place for these discussions to happen, leading to new collaborations and initiatives.



## **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF SPHERU'S HISTORY OF HEALTH IN SASKATCHEWAN TIMELINE**

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: TOM MCINTOSH (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)*

University of Regina President's Fund (\$3,998) 2014-15

The SPHERU Historical Health Timeline is a web-based, interactive resource that chronicles events that have played a role in impacting Saskatchewan residents' health, healthcare, and standards of social and economic living over the past century. Events include formal legislation, technological interventions, medical breakthroughs, widespread epidemics, and changing health care practices and policies. This project will further develop both timeline content and its application as a teaching and learning tool.



***IT TAKES A VILLAGE... GROWING TOGETHER FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY AGING IN PLACE***

***SPHERU RESEARCHER: SHANTI JOHNSON (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)***

Fulbright Canada RBC Eco-Leadership Program (\$4,000) 2014-15

Working in collaboration with the Sun Country Health Region (SCHR) and community partners, the project will create an age-friendly community garden in Estevan, Saskatchewan during the 2015 growing season. Specifically, a number of raised garden plots will be built with support of youth from the local alternative school, immigrant families, and seniors. Led by the community nutritionist, and Fulbright Scholar Dr. Shanthi Johnson, the project will include community education on different aspects of gardening, facilitated by seasoned local gardeners and/or experts.



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***NUTRITION INEQUITY IN THE INNER CITY: USING SMARTPHONES TO STUDY DIET AND FOOD ACCESS***

***SPHERU RESEARCHERS: RACHEL ENGLER-STRINGER (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), NAZEEM MUHAJARINE (CO-INVESTIGATOR) WITH KEVIN STANLEY (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), HASSANALI VATANPARAST (CO-INVESTIGATOR)***

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation Collaborative Innovation Development Grant Program (\$40,000) 2014-2015

In spite of advances in the field of community and public health nutrition, nutritional health inequalities continue to grow and non-communicable disease rates continue to climb, threatening the health, economic, and social well-being of Canadians. Over a four-month period, this research will examine detailed eating and food procurement practices of 40 individuals from diverse household composition types living in the lowest-income neighbourhoods in Saskatoon. The study will use quantitative smartphone-based surveys, as well as location, activity, and proximity data collection to understand where, when, how, and with whom individuals in lower income neighbourhoods access food and make food choices. This innovative and comprehensive study will make a significant contribution to advancing knowledge in population health interventions in the area of nutrition inequities.

## ***A PILOT STUDY EXPLORING EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTHCARE SUPPORTS FOR SENIORS IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN***

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: NUELLE NOVIK (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)*

Canadian Mental Health Association (\$10,000); SPHERU (\$10,000) 2014-15

This one-year pilot project will seek to identify the mental healthcare needs of seniors living in rural Saskatchewan, and examine the factors that contribute to, or hinder, their emotional well-being. Focusing upon the Sunrise Health Region in Saskatchewan, the study will target two distinct geographic areas within the region (Preeceville/Norquay and Ituna/Melville), both similar from a socio-economic perspective. The study methodology will involve eco-mapping, which provides a visual depiction of supports identified by participants. As part of the study we will gather feedback from the seniors interviewed about the effectiveness of eco-mapping as a research tool. Data gathered from this pilot project will be used to develop a CIHR operating grant application for funding to conduct a larger provincial study.



## ***SPOR PAN-CANADIAN NETWORK IN PRIMARY AND INTEGRATED HEALTH CARE INNOVATIONS: MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS GRANT***

*SPHERU RESEARCHERS: NAZEEM MUHAJARINE (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), CORY NEUDORF (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), SHANTHI JOHNSON (CO-INVESTIGATOR)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research Phase 2 (\$500,000) 2015-2019

The purpose of this grant is to develop a collaborative network of Saskatchewan researchers, physicians, community members, and policy makers that will focus on generating new evidence in primary and integrated health care effectiveness, efficiency, and access across the care spectrum. The team will work together to improve health equity, more specifically in indigenous and rural areas, focus on prevention, and look for ways to improve services to patients across their life spans. The value of the Saskatchewan network lies in allowing researchers from different areas to come together to work on integrating primary health care and social determinants across urban and rural areas and with indigenous peoples, while involving both physicians and policy makers to identify specific issues.



***WUSKIWIY-TAN! LET'S MOVE! AGING WELL IN A NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN MÉTIS COMMUNITY***

***SPHERU RESEARCHERS: SYLVIA ABONYI (NOMINATED PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), SARAH OOSMAN (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), BONNIE JEFFERY (CO-INVESTIGATOR), SHANTHI JOHNSON (CO-INVESTIGATOR), NAZEEM MUHAJARINE (CO-INVESTIGATOR)***

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (\$1,253,649) 2014-2019

Very little is known about the aging experiences, aspirations, and support needs of Indigenous seniors overall, and even less about under-researched Métis peoples. In partnership with the Métis community of Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan, this population health intervention research project will fill the knowledge gap and provide evidence of the effectiveness of current and emerging program and policy interventions that promote aging well for Métis and other Indigenous peoples. Over a five-year period, this project will reveal concepts and experiences of healthy aging through discussion groups, interviews, and photo projects with children, adults, and seniors. Seniors will also complete activity, diet, and quality of life measures at regular intervals. Finally, formal and informal supports and services available to seniors in the community will be systematically identified, with a selection of them to undergo evaluation.



# CONTINUING PROJECTS

## ***ASSESS, REDRESS, RE-ASSESS: ADDRESSING DISPARITIES IN RESPIRATORY HEALTH AMONG FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE***

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: SYLVIA ABONYI (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR) WITH JAMES DOSMAN, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN (NOMINATED PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), JO-ANNE EPISKENEW, PUNAM PAHWA (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (\$1,592,521) 2011-2016

Living and social conditions in some First Nations communities have created environments that are associated with adverse respiratory outcomes. In partnership with the rural communities of Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation and Montreal Lake Cree Nation, the project will evaluate individual and contextual factors on the outcomes of asthma, chronic bronchitis, and other respiratory conditions. Characterization of conditions will provide communities with information that will assist them to undertake interventions aimed at redressing the issues.



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## ***EVALUATION OF TELEHEALTH FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND FOLLOW-UP OF LUNG CANCER PATIENTS FROM RURAL SASKATCHEWAN***

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: NAZMI SARI (CO-INVESTIGATOR) WITH CHRISTOPHER HERGOTT, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)*

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (\$119,957) 2012-2015

In Saskatchewan, many lung cancer patients live outside of large medical centres and must travel long distances to see a specialist for assessment and diagnosis. This project will evaluate the potential for a telehealth lung cancer assessment clinic to improve rural patients' access to assessment and diagnosis, and provide evidence to support government funding of this initiative. Researchers will document patient satisfaction, potential cost savings and diagnosis/treatment timelines. Telehealth uses videoconference equipment to conduct assessment and follow-up of patients and has been successfully used in other areas of medicine to improve access to care for patients in rural areas.



### ***THE GOOD FOOD JUNCTION: A COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD INTERVENTION TO REDUCE NUTRITIONAL HEALTH INEQUITIES***

*SPHERU RESEARCHERS: RACHEL ENGLER-STRINGER AND NAZEEM MUHAJARINE (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS)  
SYLVIA ABONYI, CORY NEUDORF (CO-INVESTIGATORS)*

Canadian Institutes for Health Research (\$10,000 – Letter of Intent / \$50,000 – Operating) Public Health Agency of Canada (\$150,000) 2012-2015



The environments in which people live, work, and play have an important role in determining their health, including obesity, diabetes, and nutrition. The Good Food Junction, which opened in September 2012, is a 4,900-square-foot, full-service, not-for-profit grocery store containing a full range of fresh, frozen, and packaged foods. It is located in a low-income food desert neighbourhood in Saskatoon's inner city. The goal of this two-year study is to understand and model how the introduction of this large community-based food program impacts the health of individuals and families. This research presents a unique opportunity to study and understand how transformation occurs from a food desert with poor health outcomes to neighbourhoods with healthy food and healthy citizens.

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### ***HEALTH INEQUALITY IN SASKATCHEWAN: COMPARING SMALL AREA AGGREGATE DATA AND INDIVIDUAL LINKED DATA IN URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENTS***

*SPHERU RESEARCHERS: CORY NEUDORF (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR), NAZEEM MUHAJARINE (CO-INVESTIGATOR)*

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (\$120,000) 2012-2015

This study will examine the relative effect of individual and area-level socio-economic factors on health inequalities. Analyzing health administrative data and survey data at both individual and aggregate levels will help researchers to define geographic areas of greater health inequalities within the province overall, and within the targeted areas, and determine the inequality trends over time for selected health indicators. Through dissemination and discussion of the findings, the research will provide a better understanding of priorities and possible interventions at local, regional, and provincial levels, and will assist in determining potential policy and program options.

**HEALTHY START/DÉPART SANTÉ: A MULTILEVEL INTERVENTION TO INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY EATING AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN (AGES 3-5) ATTENDING CHILDCARE**

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: NAZEEM MUHAJARINE (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR); RACHEL ENGLER-STRINGER (CO-INVESTIGATOR) WITH ANNE LEIS AND LOUISE HUMBERT, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN; ROGER GAUTHIER, RÉSEAU SANTÉ EN FRANÇAIS DE LA SASKATCHEWAN (CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS)*

Public Health Agency of Canada (\$240,000 – KDE portion) February 2013 to January 2017

Healthy Start is a bilingual initiative developed in Saskatchewan that increases healthy eating and physical activity opportunities in early learning environments. Through a partnership of organizations led by the Réseau Santé en français de la Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Network for Health Services in French), the Healthy Start approach engages directors, educators, cooks, and parents by providing resources, training, and ongoing support. SPHERU, along with researchers across Canada, is involved in an evaluation component of the initiative to monitor and assess the impact of Healthy Start in both Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. SPHERU is leading the communications and knowledge dissemination and exchange (KDE) component of this research.



**IMPROVING FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY AND REDUCING FALLS AMONG FRAIL OLDER ADULTS: DELIVERY OF EXERCISE INTERVENTION THROUGH HOME CARE NETWORK**

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: SHANTHI JOHNSON WITH DAWN MCNEIL (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS)*

Canadian Institutes for Health Research (\$282,008) Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (\$68,252) 2012-2015

This project is studying ways to improve functional capacity and reduce falls among frail, largely homebound older adults by examining the impact of a home-based exercise program on functional capacity, falls, and fall-related injuries. Comparisons will be made among seniors living in rural and urban areas, and between those participating in an exercise group and those who are not. By focusing on the delivery of exercise programs through home care networks, researchers aim to reduce the impact of falls on the lives of Saskatchewan residents and the health care system.



***RURAL AND NORTHERN COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE***

*SPHERU RESEARCHERS: BONNIE JEFFERY, PAUL HACKETT, DIANE MARTZ (CO-INVESTIGATORS) WITH MARY HAMPTON (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)*

Social Science and Humanities Research Council Community-University Research Alliance (\$1,000,000) 2010-2015

This CURA project, led by RESOLVE Saskatchewan at the University of Regina, will build upon the established connections among the three RESOLVE provincial research offices, and justice and community family violence agencies across the provinces. The project will conduct research to enhance our understanding of current community responses to intimate partner violence in rural and northern regions of the Canadian Prairie provinces in order to expand support in targeted areas experiencing abuse and violence.



***A STEP TOWARDS CREATING ACTIVE URBAN COMMUNITIES: SEASONALITY AND ACTIVE SASKATOON KIDS (SASK)***

*SPHERU RESEARCHER: NAZEEM MUHAJARINE (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (\$362,845) 2014-2016

Seasonality and Active Saskatoon Kids (SASK) is an obesity intervention research project that aims to measure and identify locations where physical activity occurs in Saskatoon, across all seasons, among children aged 10-14 years. Using both a self-reported activity questionnaire and accelerometers, the research team will learn about children's active and sedentary activities at school, at home, and within the community. The goal of the study is to create more active communities in Saskatoon by addressing several existing knowledge gaps, such as the seasonal effects on physical activity and sedentariness, and where these occur. This study builds on the Smart Cities, Healthy Kids studies previously conducted in Saskatoon (2009-14).





FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPHERU OR OUR RESEARCH, SEE OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.SPHERU.CA](http://WWW.SPHERU.CA).



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