



Land Acknowledgement

For over 20 years, the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) has been a leader in population health research—the study of social and structural factors that affect the wellbeing of groups within our province. SPHERU is a bi-university health research unit based at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan.

As learners, clinicians, educators, and researchers in Canada, we recognize that we are on traditional Indigenous territories that include treaty lands, unceded lands, and Métis homelands. We pay our respects to the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit ancestors and affirm our commitment to respectful relationships with one another and this land. The Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina, with which we are affiliated, are located on Treaty 6 and Treaty 4 territory respectively, and on Métis Homelands. We endeavour to live these values in our professional and personal interactions: relationships grounded in safety and humility, respect for all peoples and their world views, reciprocity in all relationships, relevance to wholistic wellness, and responsibility for informed pedagogy and practice.

Who We Are

SPHERU is an interdisciplinary, bi-university research unit at the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina. Founded in 1999, SPHERU promotes health equity through innovative, timely, policy-relevant research. With a vision to create a healthy society and a better world through research, evaluation, and action for everyone, SPHERU has built a national profile and is one of a handful of research units in Canada well-known for advancing population health research.

SPHERU conducts intervention research to address issues of health inequity among vulnerable populations with a focus on children, rural older adults, and northern and Indigenous communities. This work involves evaluations of existing policies and programs, research on population interventions, research projects, using iterative and innovative knowledge translation strategies to ensure that findings from our research make their way to practitioners and policymakers at multiple levels of governance.

Mission/Vision

The mission of SPHERU researchers is to undertake interdisciplinary population health intervention research in collaboration with community partners, policymakers and stakeholders to address issues of health inequity among vulnerable populations.

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Message from the Co-Directors

On behalf of our SPHERU team, we are pleased to present our annual review, from January 2023 to June 2024. In doing so we begin to align our report with the end of an academic year. As a publicly funded research group, this report represents an accountability mechanism we are pleased to engage in.

Over the past 18 months, SPHERU Researchers, staff members, and trainees continued their work with the communities and decision-makers, in Saskatchewan and elsewhere. We have remained deeply committed to promoting health equity through interdisciplinary with and collaboration communities, research policymakers, and stakeholders. For example, as seen in these pages, SPHERU researchers continued to work towards tangible changes in dementia care Saskatchewan by supporting community-engaged art projects for individuals with dementia and their caregivers.

Although COVID-19 is not at the forefront and not with the same intensity as it was 2-3 years ago, lessons learned from the pandemic are important contributions to the knowledge as they inform public health emergency navigation in the future.





Message Cont'd...

It can also lead to innovations in service delivery and address systemic barriers to health. One of the consequences of the unprecedented times of the public health crisis was the changes in public trust in government, social organizations, medical providers, and researchers. The Trust Dynamics project presented within these pages covers this issue.

There are many more impactful research projects presented in this report, from mental health and substance use to designing cities with health and wellbeing in mind to research influencing national school food programming to improving maternal and reproductive health and rights globally. The research projects reported here are as diverse as they are intensely community-engaged, ultimately making a difference in people's lives through policy and program changes.

As we write this, we are at the cusp of SPHERU entering its 25th year since its establishment. This coming year is a time to reflect on the impact we have had as well as to celebrate, and to re-envision our directions for the future. If SPHERU were a person, at 25, we would be at the height of our youth and vitality and possibilities. As an organization, we feel that the best years are still ahead of us.

We extend our sincere thanks to our researchers, partners, and the communities we work with for their dedication and support. Together, we will continue our work toward a more equitable and healthier future.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gabriela Novotna & Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine

Our Partners



University

Health and wellness-related 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 multidisciplinary research projects on 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 logistic support and office space, the University of Regina continues to support SPHERU in its work to produce high-quality, policy-relevant research.

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 policymakers in the research institutions. With a wide range of health science colleges and programs, the University of Saskatchewan is committed to expanding health research. The university is home SPHERU's to 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.

Funders

While its two university partners primarily 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 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. Researchers in our team currently hold grants from Global Affairs Canada and the Government of Canada to advance research around health equity for various population groups. As well, SPHERU has been awarded grants from several other 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 conducts program evaluations in the area of population health.





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 outlines the cooperative agreement of the partner institutions to support the work of SPHERU and is operationalized through a Management Advisory Group (MAG). MAG members are senior university administrators appointed by the Vice-Presidents of Research at both universities. SPHERU's co-directors meet regularly with the MAG to provide updates on the unit's research and financial activities and to seek advice and support for the unit.



Adam Baxter-Jones, PhD University of Saskatchewan Interim Associate Provost Health Professor, College of Kinesiology Research: physical growth and maturation of children related to physical activity



Shannon Dea, PhD
University of Regina
Dean of the Faculty of
Arts
Professor, Department
of Philosophy and
Classics
Research: social and
feminist philosophy,
issues in higher
education



Marek Radomski, MD, PhD, DSc, MPAL, FCAHS
University of Saskatchewan
Vice-Dean Research (OVDR)
Professor
Research: platelet
regulation, cancer, nitric
oxide, and MMP biology and
pharmacology, as well as in
nanomedicine,
nanopharmacology,
nanotoxicology, SARS-CoV-2
research



Andrea Sterzuk, PhD
University of Regina
Associate Vice
President Research
Professor, Faculty of
Education
Research: language
issues related to
settler colonialism

Research Faculty

Our researchers and associates come from a variety of academic backgrounds including geography, political science, anthropology, epidemiology, social work, kinesiology, and nutrition. Researchers are appointed at two SPHERU sites: the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina.



Sylvia Abonyi, PhD.
Professor/ Department Head,
Community Health and
Epidemiology, University of
Saskatchewan
Research: qualitative
research, community
engaged research



Cheryl Camillo, PhD.
Associate Professor,
Johnson Shoyama Graduate
School of Public Policy,
University of Regina
Research: Global Population
Health System



James Daschuk, PhD.
Professor Faculty of
Kinesiology and Health
Studies at the University of
Regina.
Research: the origins and
evolution of modern diseases



PhD.
Professor, Department of
Community Health and
Epidemiology, College of
Medicine University of
Saskatchewan
Research: community food
security, food environments
and food access, food
system sustainability, health
promotion, and communitybased and participatory
research



Daniel Fuller, PhD.
Associate Professor in
Community Health and
Epidemiology University of
Saskatchewan
Research: wearable
technologies, physical activity,
transportation interventions,
equity in urban spaces, artificial
intelligence for Public Health



Paul Hackett, PhD.
Professor, Department of
Geography and Planning,
University of Saskatchewan
Research: colonialism on the
health of Indigenous
communities, history of
tuberculosis and diabetes
among the western First
Nations



Bonnie Jeffery, PhD.
Professor in the Faculty of
Social Work, University of
Regina
Research: aging in place,
social inclusion for people
with dementia

Research Faculty Cont'd...



Akram Mahani, PhD.
Assistant Professor at
Johnson Shoyama Graduate
School of Public Policy,
University of Regina
Research: healthy cities and
communities, health equity
and social determinants of
health



Tom McIntosh, PhD.
Associate Dean of Arts
(Research and Graduate
Studies)/ Professor of Politics
and International Studies,
University of Regina
Research: public policy, public
health and health care,
federalism,
intergovernmental politics



Nazeem Muhajarine, PhD.
Professor, Department of
Community Health and
Epidemiology, University of
Saskatchewan
Research: social
epidemiology, population
health intervention, maternal
and child health, health and
place



Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina.
Research: rural and remote health and mental health, older adults, dementia and dementia care, and end-of-life care



Cabriela Novotna, PhD.
Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina.
Research: reduction of health and social harms associated with substance

use



Sarah Oosman, PhD.
Associate Professor,
University of Saskatchewan
Research: healthy aging in
place project, youth diabetes
in northern Métis and First
Nations communities



Michelle Stewart, PhD.
Affiliation: Professor,
University of Regina.
Research: cognitive
disabilities, mental health and
racialized inequalities in the
criminal justice and child
welfare systems.



Associate Researchers



Juanita Bascu, PhD.
Canada Research Chair (Tier II) Nursing and Population Health/Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, Thompson Rivers University Research: rural aging, stigma, dementia, cognitive health promotion, social media, health policy



Shanti Johnson, PhD.
Professor and V.P. Research
and Innovation at the
University of Windsor.
Research: Falls/injury
prevention, aging in place in
rural communities, and social
isolation among immigrant
and refugee seniors



Cory Neudorf, PhD.
Professor, Department of
Community Health and
Epidemiology, University of
Saskatchewan/Interim Senior
Medical Health Officer,
Saskatchewan Health
Authority/ President, Urban
Public Health Network of
Canada
Research: public health
systems and services



Staff

The SPHERU team is made up of a committed and diverse staff complement of researchers, scholars, clinicians, project managers, research administrators, and knowledge translation experts.



Nancy Akwen, PhD Evaluation Coordinator (University of Regina)



Stefanie Foster, BA, B.Ed Research Manager (University of Saskatchewan)



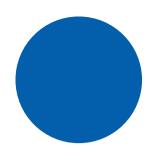
Yolanda Palmer-Clarke, PhD Research Officer (University of Saskatchewan)

Our researchers have also trained over 20 undergraduates, graduates and post-doctoral fellows many of whom have found substantive jobs in the workforce.

Combined, over 30 post docs, graduate student trainees were mentored by SPHERU faculty 2023-2024!



Sue McGee, BHS, M.Cert HSM & PM Project Coordinator (University of Regina)



Research Support Workers

SPHERU researchers are supported by highly skilled and qualified research officers, research coordinators, research assistants and analysts. We recognize their hard work and dedicated efforts to making our research, and unit, a success. We acknowledge:

Ahmed, Sabbir Akwen, Nancy Alaniz Salinas, Natalia Andre, Fernanda Berenyi, Rochelle Billington, Jennifer Bowmilk, Pushpita Braun, Fionnuala Burgess, Gerry Crockford, Barb Chase, Patrick Dena, Isabelle Dixon, James Forsyth, Jessie Foster, Stefanie Galande, Aditya

Gupta, Suvadra
Heerspink, Bronwyn
Kader, Shirmin Bintay
Kouri, Denise
Knopf, Maren
Kossick, Don
Ly, May
Mamyia, Hiroshi
McGill, Sue
Mehdiyeva, Khatira
Michnik, Kaylee
Mirza, Shakil
Nahar, Meherun
Palmer-Clarke, Yolanda
Pearman, Katrina

Pisolkar, Vaidehi
Quinn, Shay
Ramamoorthy, Sahana
Rizvi, Syed
Schipper, Zoe
Shakotko, Tammy
Shakurun, Nahin
Stenberg, Style
Sturrock, Shelby
Sunna, Tachlima
Tsang, Cristina
Uwamahoro, Nadege
Verity, Wendy
Vo, Claire



Research Highlights



"Connecting the Dots" - Council of Canadian Academies Expert Panel on Health Data Sharing

SPHERU Director, Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine sat on the Expert Panel for Health Data Sharing. Their report, Connecting the Dots, explored opportunities for maximizing the sharing of health data in Canada. Health data sharing has been shown to reduce unnecessary testing, time spent re-entering information, and preventable hospital admissions.



https://www.cca-reports.ca/reports/ health-data-sharing-in-canada/

Trust Dynamics and Equity in Public Health

Public trust in government, health institutions, and social organizations is crucial for healthcare access and crisis management. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that lower trust correlates with higher mortality rates and vaccine hesitancy. Effective communication and transparency help combat conspiracy beliefs and promote vaccine acceptance and crisis mitigation strategies. This groundbreaking study will:

- 1. Investigate public trust evolution in science and public health institutions during the pandemic.
- 2. Identify factors influencing trust, especially among Canadians and minority communities, emphasizing communication, socio-economic factors, and authority roles.
- 3. Assess the impact of trust on public compliance and analyze the relationship between trust levels and public compliance.

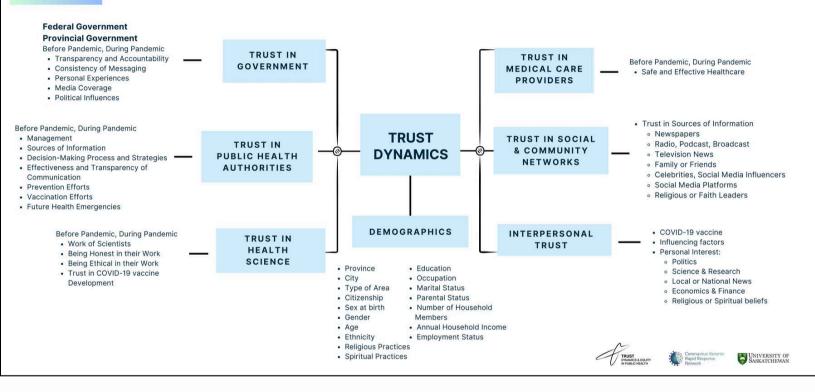
The study uses a two-phase, sequential mixed methods approach to comprehensively examine trust dynamics during the pandemic in Canada. The first phase involved administering an online survey to 5,607 participants across Canada, using stratified sampling to ensure demographic diversity. The survey comprised 70 questions presented in both English and French. The diagram below shows the survey's content and logical structure. The recruitment process was conducted by Leger. In the subsequent qualitative phase, qualitative methods are being utilized to gain a deeper understanding of the identified patterns and trends.

Findings from this national study, both quantitative and qualitative, deepen the understanding of the evolving public trust during the pandemic. These insights aid real-time crisis management and future health emergency responses, helping policymakers refine communication strategies, improve public compliance and vaccine uptake, and foster resilience in healthcare systems

TRUST DYNAMICS AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC HEALTH

A MIXED-METHODS STUDY ON COVID-19





SPHERU Researchers Continue to Work to Improve the Lives of Patients with Dementia



Drs. Bonnie Jeffery, Nuelle Novik, Tom McIntosh and Akram Mahani (University of Regina) are working to make changes in the field of dementia care in Saskatchewan. The team has spent decades on the frontlines working to better understand aging and dementia, particularly in rural Saskatchewan. "We know that the longer people can stay in their own homes and communities, the better their health outcomes will be," says Dr. Jeffery, a professor in the Faculty of Social Work. "The more we delay older adults from entering a long-term care facility, the cheaper and less stressful it is for everyone. But barriers still exist. Saskatchewan has 1.2 million people and one-third live in rural areas -many of them older adults. With the end of provincial-rural bus service, it can be hard to find rides to see specialists in the city." Dr. Jeffery adds that it's also stressful to drive to the city to see a specialist. "How do you cope in unfamiliar surroundings or navigate traffic and parking?"



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Belong Where You Find Yourself

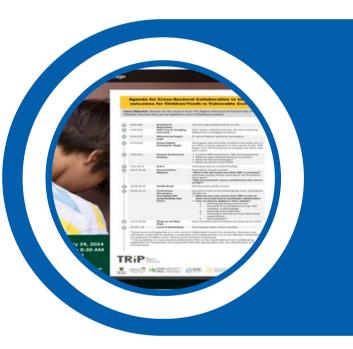
Supported by SPHERU researchers, Bonnie Jeffery, Nuelle Novik, Akram Mahani, and Tom McIntosh, the film Belong Where You Find Yourself was screened on May 8th and 11th, 2024, in Regina and Saskatoon, respectively. This project documented the work and experiences of those involved in a community-engaged art project that supported artists living with dementia and their care partners.

The film depicts the period from January 2022 to May 2023, in which lead artists, Alana Moore and Amber Phelps Bondaroff, worked closely with a community of 12 artists from Yorkton and surrounding areas whose lives have been impacted by dementia. In this hour-long documentary, filmmaker, Adrienne (Sunny) Adams, weaves documentation of the artworks created with personal stories and experiences of the artists involved.

Participating Artists in the BWYFY Project include: Elaine Berard & Herb Elder; Bonnie & Leon Jones; Merle & Dean Wiley; Amanda Babey & Verna Off; Pat & Ron Walton; and Twila Napoleoni & Jeanette Haberstock.

TRiP Project

On February 29, 2024, Dr. Akram Mahani, SPHERU researcher, brought together 60 stakeholders, including policymakers, service providers, and persons with lived experiences from diverse human service organizations, to cross-sectional collaboration discuss improve outcomes for vulnerable children and youth. A comprehensive report of research findings was shared at the event. The stakeholders from diverse human services organizations dialogued about translating the Regina Intersectoral Partnership (TRiP). The report showcases key findings and insights from this dynamic event.



Build Back Better: Data for Health Equity

The Build Back Better project is focused on identifying and measuring relationships between the COVID-19 pandemic and wider health and social impacts within four focus areas: food insecurity, housing precarity, and homelessness, mental health, and substance use. Additionally, the project sought to identify how the pandemic affected service providers and service users across the province as they navigated the pandemic. To do so, the report draws on qualitative data collected through interviews with service providers and people who access services.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic extend beyond medical health consequences to include social, economic, emotional, and psychological impacts. Negative health outcomes were disproportionate during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saskatchewan and most acutely experienced by vulnerable and equity-seeking groups. Human service organizations in Saskatchewan were adaptive and reflexive to address newfound challenges in service delivery and the changing needs of the communities they served.

BUILD BACK BETTER

LESSONS LEARNED

FROM THE PANDEMIC



The Remember Rebuild Saskatchewan project is a partnership between researchers in **Health Sciences** and **Humanities** at the **University of Saskatchewan**, funded by federal grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

The goal of the project was to identify the impacts of the pandemic on service providers and people accessing services.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC

Innovations in Service Delivery

Novel adaptations by Human Service Organizations in response to the pandemic

- · Virtual/telephone
- Mobile
- Outdoor
- · Structured time allotments
- New services

Approaches to Service Delivery

Approaches by providers to maintain service delivery and optimize the health and well-being of people they serve

- · Person centered
- · Meeting people where they are at
- · Focus on psychological health and safety
- Coordinated service delivery along a continuum of care
- · Preparation and prevention

Pandemic Navigation

Supports for responding to pandemics in the future

- Logistical supports
- · Financial supports
- · Supports from provincial government

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

Include Community in Emergency Response

Multi-sectoral and community collaborations in policy- and decision-making for pandemic and emergency response planning, social assistance programming, and for the overall well-being of communities.

Create Sustainable Funding Models for Organizations

Mandate multi-year funding agreements for community-based and non-profit organizations for increased sustainability of services.

Recognize and Address Systemic Barriers to Health

Implement an equity lens in pandemic response and social assistance, develop health indicators, establish accountability structures within public health, and allocate public investment to housing and substance use programs.

Mozambique-Canada Maternal Health Project, 2017-2024, Concludes on a High Note

The past 18 months of the Mozambique-Canada Maternal Health Project were exciting and productive. We worked hard to wrap up the seven-year project with a strong sense of collaborative achievement. The project's main premise was that women's empowerment is instrumental to improved sexual, reproductive, maternal, and newborn health. Women-centered practices were important in all areas of implementation. Other key values in our project's approach were collaboration, community engagement, and skill development through flexibility.

The project influenced a comprehensive range of activities that set the foundation for improved sexual, reproductive, maternal, and newborn health with far-reaching impacts: from community-engaged health practice to skills training and systems building to women's and girls' empowerment and the wider promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights within and beyond health care.

Intervention research focused on women's maternal experiences, maternal near-miss, and maternity waiting homes, all of which have generated rich insights and are ongoing. Research findings have been fed back into the activities, further driving evidence-based interventions. At the same time, they have also led to more than a dozen peer-reviewed publications, presentations, and policy dialogues.

As of June 27, 2024, we have officially begun the new project called Mozambique-Canada Sexual and Reproductive Health for Young Women in Inhambane to continue, deepen, and expand the strong foundations of this project. Stay tuned!



New Project on Sexual and Reproductive Health for Young Women in Inhambane. A Mozambique-Canada Partnership.

SPHERU Director and researcher Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine's team received \$20 million from the Government of Canada for a massive international development project to improve education, treatment, infrastructure, and service for sexual, reproductive health and rights of girls and young women in Mozambique.

Spearheaded by Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine (PhD), a professor in Community Health and Epidemiology in the College of Medicine and the director of the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, the project will comprehensively incorporate innovative solutions to support the rights and health of women and young girls across six districts and 30 partner communities in the Inhambane province of Mozambique.

The funding for the project is part of a \$65 million package marked for a series of international development projects and was announced by the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Canada's Minister of International Development.

The project will work to establish "model communities of care" in those six districts that can serve as examples for high-quality care and education for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young women.





SASKATOON CITY COUNCILLORS

CITY-BUILDING AND

DESIGN PRACTICES:

A SURVEY OF

Research Brief

AND EMPLOYEES

Saskatoon Multisectoral Team Visits Copenhagen

SPHERU researchers join with Saskatoon and City officials to Mayor explore sustainable cities. In fall 2023, SPHERU researcher, Muhajarine, partnered USask, the City of Saskatoon and the Saskatchewan Health Authority to attend 880 Cities' Healthy Urban Policy Workshop in Copenhagen, Denmark where they learned about innovative public and active. SPHERU is proud to partner with USask, the City of Saskatoon and the Saskatchewan Health Authority to attend the Implementing Healthy Urban Policy Workshop hosted Copenhagen, Denmark by 880Cities. The goal was to learn from what Denmark does best when it comes to public and active transportation in their cities, so we can use their best ideas to ensure Saskatoon remains "a great place to live, work, learn and play."

State of Healthcare in Saskatchewan

To address changes to the delivery of healthcare in rural Saskatchewan, SPHERU Regina researchers investigated rural healthcare in multiple phases, including a thorough literature review, analysis of provincial health service disruptions data, interviews with Key Informants, and a World Café event that brought together various stakeholders for discussion. Findings suggest that critical issues in rural healthcare that cannot be left unaddressed and demonstrate the need to support and invest in rural healthcare. Overall, four major themes emerged from all of the data and information examined inclusive of all phases of the project:

- The quality of rural healthcare is at stake as patients ultimately take the burden of the existing systemic challenges and issues.
- The creation of a single health authority failed to take into account the particularities of rural care delivery and, thus, created greater inequities in health service delivery in rural communities.
- Health system workers are experiencing an overwhelming sense of loss, including loss of voice, morale, commitment to the health profession, and overall confidence in rural healthcare.

Healthcare is the "life-blood" of rural communities, and the recent changes in healthcare impact—various aspects of communities well beyond healthcare services.

Good Food Project

After studying and advocating for a national food program for schools, Rachel Engler-Stringer maintains that a national school food program has the potential to deliver big benefits to Canadian kids, parents and society, provided it's set up well.

"I can say that this has been a long time coming," Rachel Engler-Stringer said of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's announcement this week that the upcoming federal budget will include \$1 billion over five years to set up a school meals program in conjunction with the provinces.

Engler-Stringer, a professor of community health and epidemiology at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine, has spent the better part of the last 20 years researching child health and community nutrition.

The announcement was made on April 1, 2024 by Prime Minister Justine Trudeau.

Engler-Stringer said ideally, programs should seek to provide meals consistent with Canada's food guide and stressed that they must not become an opportunity for the food industry to market products to children. She also called for programs to be "locally adapted," noting for example that in Saskatoon, many schools have large newcomer populations who may require vegetarian or halal options.



Strong Bodies, Spirits, Minds, and Voices

Privileging Indigenous Knowledge to Guide Pediatric Type 2 Diabetes Prevention with

First Nations and Métis Communities

Dr. Sara Oosman and her team were recently awarded nearly \$2 million in funding over the next five years from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to continue research community with current partners eventually expand it across diverse Indigenous communities throughout Saskatchewan. Île-àla-Crosse and James Smith Cree Nation are the first two communities to partner on this project. Several other communities, including Clearwater River Dënë Nation, La Loche, Sweetgrass First Nation, Little Pine First Nation, and Poundmaker Cree Nation, have also started engaging as partners with the project.







Faculty Highlights

Outside of their research, our SPHERU faculty continue to make strides professionally and socially while building community. Hearty congratulations to our SPHERU faculty!



In September of 2023, Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine was inducted into the Fellowship of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.



Dr. Rachel Engler-Stringer received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal (Saskatchewan) in January 2023.



Dr. Nazeem
Muhajarine
received the
Queen Elizabeth II
Platinum Jubilee
Medal
(Saskatchewan) in
April 2023.

Faculty Highlights Cont'd...



Dr. Nazeem
Muhajarine
received the Best
Supervisor Award at
the 2024 Life and
Health Sciences
EXPO, held on May
2, 2024.



Dr. Sylvia Abonyi was promoted to full professor, was appointed Head of Community Health and Epidemiology.



Michelle Stewart was promoted to full professor.



New and Ongoing Projects



Project Title: CapaCITY/É SPHERU Researchers: Daniel Fuller and Nazeem Muhajarine Amount Awarded: \$3,000,000 Funder: CIHR

Project Title: Cross-Sectoral Collaboration to Improve Outcomes for Children/Youth in **Vulnerable Contexts** SPHERU Researchers: Akram Mahani (PI), Nazeem Muhajarine (Co-I), Bonnie Jeffery (Co-I), Tom McIntosh (Co-I) Amount Awarded: CAD \$150,000 Funder: Catalyst Grant: Policy Research for Health System Transformation. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Duration: March 2023 to

March 2025

Project Title: The Current State of Rural Health Care in Saskatchewan. SPHERU Researchers: Nuelle Novik (PI) Bonnie Jeffery (Co-PI), Tom McIntosh (Co-PI), Cheryl Camillo (Co-PI) Amount Awarded: Total \$25,300 Funder: CUPE 5430, Saskatchewan Duration: November 2022 to

March 2024

2024

Project Title: Data and Equity
Needed to Drive Post-Pandemic
Recovery in Canada: A
Saskatchewan Contribution (Lay
Title: Building Back Better in PostPandemic in Saskatchewan).
SPHERU Researchers: Muhajarine,
N., (NPI), Engler-Stringer, R.,
Novik, N. (CoPI), Jeffery, B.,
Mcintosh, T. (CoPI), Novotna, G.
(CoPI)
Amount Awarded: \$418,565
Funder: Canadian Institutes of
Health Research
Duration: March 2022 to March

Project Title: Engaging Communities and Health Workers to Reduce Maternal and Newborn Mortality in Inhambane, Mozambique. SPHERU Researchers: Nazeem Muhajarine N (PI), Sylvia

Abonyi

Amount Awarded: \$16.9 million CAD + 350,000 CAD COVID-19 supplement Funder: Global Affairs

Canada.

Duration: April 2017 to

August 2024

Project Title: Growing to Half Million in Saskatoon: An Inclusive, Vibrant and Sustainable City for All. SPHERU Researchers: Nazeem Muhajarine (NPI) & Daniel Fuller, Rachel Engler-Stringer Amount Awarded: \$68,065 Funder: Planning Grants for Implementing Healthy Urban Policy. Healthy Cities Research Initiative - CIHR. Duration: October 2023 to September 2024

Project Title: Integration of Health into Urban Planning

Policies

SPHERU Researchers: Akram Mahani and Nazeem Muhajarine

(Co-Is)

Amount Awarded: \$10,000 Duration: January 2023 to

January 2024

Project Title: INTERACT SPHERU Researchers: Daniel Fuller and Nazeem Muhajarine

Amount: \$1.2M Funder: CIHR

August 2024

Project Title: Interventions to **Enhance Social Inclusion for** Persons Living with Dementia and their Care Partners in Rural Saskatchewan SPHERU Researchers: Bonnie Jeffery (PI), Tom McIntosh (Co-I), Nuelle Novik (Co-I) Amount Awarded: \$3,000,000 Funder: Employment & Social Development Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program Duration: September 2019 to

Project Title: Kehokatowin ~ Northern Saskatchewan Métis gathering here and there to age well in place(s)

SPHERU Researchers: Sarah Oosman, Sylvia Abonyi, and Paul Hackett

Amount Awarded: 960,075.0 (CAD).

Funder: Project Grant, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

Duration: October 2023 to September 2027

Project Title: Mozambique-Canada Sexual and Female Reproductive Health for Young Women in Inhambane SPHERU Researchers: Nazeem Muhajarine N (PI), Sylvia Abonyi Amount Awarded: \$20 million (CAD)

Funder: Government of Canada Duration: September 2024 to

August 2031

Project Title: Past in the Present: Dynevor Indian Hospital (1908-34) and Persistent Colonial Tuberculosis Legacies, SPHERU Researchers: Paul Hackett (Co-I), Sylvia Abonyi (Co-I)

Amount Awarded: \$74,705.00 Funder: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Insight Development Grant

Duration: June 2023 to May

2025

Project Title: Professional
Identity Development of
Addiction Counsellors in
Recovery Working in Addiction
Services in Saskatchewan:
Grounded Theory
Amount Awarded: \$78,200
SPHERU Researcher: Gabriela
Novotna (PI)

Novotna (PI) Funder: SHRF

Duration: October 2018-August

2024

Project Title: Remembering and Rebuilding: Saskatchewan's COVID-19 Public Archive. SPHERU Researchers: Nazeem Muhajarine, Sylvia Paul Hackett, Tom McIntosh, Michelle Stewart, Bonnie Jefferv Amount Awarded: \$199,094 Funder: Social Sciences and

Council of Canada. Duration: 2022 to Current

Humanities Research

Project Title: See us, hear us (SUHU) 2.0 - Mental Health and Well-Being Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children, Youth, and Families in Saskatchewan. SPHERU Researchers: Nazeem Muhajarine, Bonnie Jeffery, Tom McIntosh, Nuelle Novik Amount Awarded: \$149,926 Funder: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Duration: March 2021 to March 2025

Project Title: Strong Bodies, Spirits, Minds, and Voices ~ Privileging Indigenous Knowledge to Guide Pediatric Type 2 Diabetes Prevention with First Nations and Métis Communities SPHERU Researchers: Sarah Oosman and Sylvia Abonyi, Amount Awarded: 1,999,176.00 (CAD)

Funder: Team Grant - Diabetes Prevention and Treatment in Indigenous Communities: Resilience and Wellness, Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Duration: April 2023 to March 2028

Project Title: Understanding How Municipalities Work in Partnership with Local Public Health Systems to **Enhance Population Health** Outcomes and Reduce Health Inequalities SPHERU Researchers: Akram Mahani (PI), Nazeem Muhajarine (Co-I), Tom McIntosh (Co-I)

Amount Awarded: \$150,000

Funder: SHRF

Duration: June 2023 to June 2026



Dissemination Highlights



Published Articles

Adeyinka, D.A., Novik, N., Novotna, G., Bartram, M., Robert, G., & Muhajarine, N. (2023). Prevalence and factors associated with suicidal ideation, cannabis, and alcohol misuse during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saskatchewan: Findings from a joint-effect modeling. BMC Psychiatry 23. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-023-05051-w

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Everitt, T., Ward, S., Martin, W., & Engler-Stringer, R. (2023). Factors contributing to school food program acceptance: A Review of Canadian literature. Health Promotion International, 38(1): daac160.

Fitzpatrick, T., Camillo, C.A., Hillis, S., Habbick, M., Roerig, M., Muhajarine, N., & Allin, S. (2023b). The impact of provincial proof of vaccination policies on age-specific first-dose uptake of COVID-19 vaccines in Canada. Health Affairs 42(11): 1595-1605. http://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2022.01237

Fitzpatrick, T., Camillo, C.A., Hillis, S., Habbick, M., Roerig, M., Muhajarine, N., & Allin, S. (2023a). Comparison of COVID-19 vaccination rollout approaches across Canada: Case studies of four diverse provinces. Health Reform Observer – Observatoire des Réformes de Santé 11(1): 1-27. http://doi.org/10.13162/hro-ors.v11i1.5118

Fuller, D., Bell, S., Firth, C. L., Muhajarine, N., Nelson, T., Stanley, K., Sones, M., Smith, J., Thierry, B., Laberee, K., Stephens, Z. P., Phillips, K., Kestens, Y., & Winters, M. (2023). Wave 1 results of the INTerventions, Research, and Action in Cities Team (INTERACT) cohort study: Examining spatio-temporal measures for urban environments and health. Health & Place, 79, 102646–102646. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2021.102646

Khan, A., Abonyi, S. & Neudorf, C. (2023). Barriers and facilitators in uptake of human papillomavirus vaccine across English Canada: A review. Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics, 19(1): 1-27.

Khan, A., Abonyi, S., Neudorf, C., Galea, S. & Ahmed, S. (2023). Barriers to and facilitators of human papillomavirus vaccination in an ethnically diverse group of migrant parents: A qualitative mixed methods study. Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics, 19(3).

Mahani, A., Lyeo, J. S., Fung, A., Husack, K., Muhajarine, N., Diener, T., Brown, C. (2024). Barriers to Integration of Health and Equity into Urban Design Policies in Regina, Saskatchewan. Health Promotion International (In Press).

Mahani, A., Lyeo, J. S., Fung, A., Husack, K., Muhajarine, N., Diener, T., Brown, C. (2024). How Municipal Actors Leverage Evidence to Support Urban Planning: Perspectives from the City of Regina. Canadian Public Policy (In Press).

Mahani, A., Lyeo, J. S., Fung, A., Husack, K., Muhajarine, N., Diener, T., Brown, C. (2024). How do Municipal Policy- and Decision-Makers Evaluate the Impact of Their Policies? Insights from the City of Regina in Saskatchewan, Canada. The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation (Under Revisions).

Mahani, A., McKenna, E., Thomsen, E., Zahid, S. (2024). Disability Integration in TRiP (The Regina intersectoral Partnership): Opportunities and Challenges. Disability and Rehabilitation (Under Review).

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McIntosh, T. (2023). "Bilateral federalism, value-based healthcare and the future of Canadian intergovernmental diplomacy on health." Healthcare Policy, 18 (4), 25-41. http://doi.org/10.12927/hcpol.2023.27095b

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JMIR Research Protocols, 12,
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Muhajarine, N., Pisolkar, V., Hinz, T., Adeyinka, D. A., McCutcheon, J., Alaverdashvili, M., Damodharan, S., Dena, I., Jurgens, C., Taras, V., Green, K., Kallio, N., & Palmer-Clarke, Y. (2023). Mental health and health-related quality of life of children and youth during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic: results from a crosssectional survey in Saskatchewan, Canada. Children (Basel), 10(6), 1009. https://doi.org/10.3390/ children10061009

Novotna, G., Siddique, A., & D'Sena (Under review).
Recovery Management of the Addiction Counsellors with Lived Experience in the Age of Neoliberalism: A Qualitative Exploration. Contemporary Drug Problems.

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Community perceptions of sustainability: (Re)Framing what matters for more just, ethical, and liveable municipalities. Local Environment. https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2024.2306598

Uwamahoro, N. S., Forsyth, J., Andre, F., Mandlate, D. A., Gilmore, B., & Muhajarine, N. (2024). Realist evaluation of maternity waiting home intervention models in Inhambane, Mozambique: protocol for a comparative embedded case study, the Mozambique-Canada Maternal Health Project. BMJ Open, 14(3), e075681-e075681. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2023-075681

Winters, M., Fuller, D., Cloutier, M.-S., Harris, M. A., Howard, A., Kestens, Y., Kirk, S., Macpherson, A., Moore, S., Rothman, L., Shareck, M., Tomasone, J. R., Laberee, K., Stephens, Z. P., Sones, M., Ayton, D., Batomen, B., Bell, S., Collins, P., ... Beck, B. (2024). Building CapaCITY/É for sustainable transportation: protocol for an implementation science research program in healthy cities. BMJ Open, 14(4), e085850-e085850. https:// doi.org/10.1136/ bmjopen-2024-085850

Book Chapters

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Reports

Akwen, N. Jeffery, B., Mahani, A., Novik, N., & McIntosh, T. (2023). Evaluation Report: City of Yorkton Facility Audit (Dementia Supports in Rural Saskatchewan Initiative). Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit.

Akwen, N., Jeffery, B., Mahani, A., Novik, N. & McIntosh, T. (2023). City of Yorkton Indoor Facility Audit: Outcome evaluation report (Interventions to enhance social inclusion for persons living with dementia and their care partners in rural Saskatchewan). Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit.

Camillo, C. (2023). CoVaRR-Net Pillar 8 Public Health, Health Systems, Social Policy Team. (2023). Provincial/Territorial Environmental Scan of COVID Surveillance, Control and Prevention Information collected from September 27, 2023 to October 10, 2023. https://covarrnet.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/vaccine-availability-in-canada.pdf

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Novik, N., Ly, M., McIntosh, T., Jeffery, B., & Camillo, C.A. (2024). The current state of healthcare in rural Saskatchewan: Final report. University of Regina: Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit.

Novik, N., McIntosh, T., Jeffery, B., Camillo, C.A., & Heerspink, B. (2023). Project report: Rural healthcare in Saskatchewan. Phase I: Literature review and document analysis. University of Regina: Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit. Available at https://spheru.ca/documents/report-cupephase1-final-may2023.pdf

Policy Briefs

Mahani, A. Petit, M. Stone, W. Dudar, L. (2023). Coordinating Human Service Systems for the Vulnerable: Lessons from The Regina intersectoral Partnership (TRiP). Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. Available at: www.schoolofpublicpolicy.sk.ca

Mahani, A., Sean Lyeo, J., Fung, A., Husack, K., Muhajarine, N., Diener, T., & Brown, C. (2024). Barriers to healthy urban design policies: perspectives from the City of Regina in Saskatchewan. Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. Available at: www.schoolofpublicpolicy.sk.ca

Mahani, A., Lyeo, J.S., Muhajarine, N. (2024). New Study Reveals Four Critical Barriers to Building Healthier Canadian Cities. The Conversation Canada. Available at: https:// theconversation.com/new-study-reveals-four-criticalbarriers-to-building-healthier-canadian-cities-218306

Presentations

Adeyinka, D., Novik, N., Novotna, G., Bartram, M., Gabrys, R., & Muhajarine, N. (2023, November 23-25). Prevalence and factors associated with suicidal ideation, cannabis, and alcohol misuse during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saskatchewan: findings from a joint-effect modeling [Oral]. CCSA's Issues of Substance Conference, Vancouver, BC, November 23 – 25, 2023.

Akwen, N., Mahani, A., Jeffery, B., Novik, N. & McIntosh, T. (2023, October 28). "The 5-year grant period is over before you know it": Rethinking sustainability planning for enduring community-led dementia friendly interventions. Canadian Association on Gerontology Annual Conference and Scientific Meeting. Toronto, ON.

Akwen, N., Mahani, A., Jeffery, B., Novik, N., McIntosh, M. (2023, October 26-28). "The 5-year grant period is over before you know it": Rethinking sustainability planning for enduring community-led dementia friendly interventions. Poster Presentation at the Canadian Association on Gerontology- CAG2023: Community Engaged Teaching, Research & Practice. Toronto, ON.

Camillo, C. A. (2023, June 22). Studying provincial/territorial COVID-19 vaccination campaigns: Opportunities and challenges of comparative analysis. Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis Workshop: Territorial Governance and Comparative Policy Analysis at the Subnational Level. Montreal, QC.

Camillo, C.A. & Berman, P. (comoderators). Emerging Lessons from Health Systems Policies and Reforms during COVID-19. (2023, December 8). Health Reform Observer – Observatoire des Réformes de Santé, McMaster University, Hamilton Ontario and Institute for Pandemics & North American Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario (via Zoom).

Camillo, C.A., Brouwers, M., & Betker, C. (co-moderators). (2023, May 17). What is needed to build a successful network for pandemic preparedness and to build upon our successes – a SWOT Analysis. CoVaRR-Net Spring 2023 Meeting, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON.

Engler-Stringer, R. (2023, January 17). Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Panel Discussion on Food Security. Panel Discussion on Food Security. Saskatoon, SK.

Engler-Stringer, R., & Foster, S. (2023, March 29). Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation Child and Youth Health Networking and Launch Event. Child and Youth Health Networking and Launch Event, Saskatoon, SK.

Engler-Stringer, R., Shakotko, T., Foster, S., & Hannah, B. (2023, September 20). School food program development with nine First Nation schools: Centering food sovereignty. Food Sovereignty Conference, Saskatoon, SK.

Fitzpatrick, T., Camillo, C.A., Hillis, S., Habbick, M., Roerig, M., Muhajarine N., & Allin, S. (2023. May 17). The impact of provincial proof of vaccination (POV) policies on age-specific first dose uptake of Covid-19 vaccines in Canada (poster presentation by C. A. Camillo). CoVaRR-Net Spring 2023 Meeting, Ottawa, ON.

Fitzpatrick, T., Camillo, C.A., Hillis, S., Habbick, M., Roerig, M., Muhajarine N., & Allin, S. (2023, April 25 - 27). The impact of provincial proof of vaccination policies on agespecific uptake of first doses of COVID-19 vaccines in Canada (poster presentation by T. Fitzpatrick). Canadian Immunization Conference (CIC), Ottawa, ON.

Novotna, G. (2023, January 15-17).
Stigma and Recovery Management in Addiction Counsellors with Lived or Living Experience of Addiction: A Grounded Theory. 27th Annual Conference of Society for Social Work and Research: SocialWork Science and Complex Problems: Battling Inequities + Building Solutions., Phoenix, AZ. US.

Novotna, G. (2023, June 20-23)
Recovery Management Among
Addiction Professionals with Lived
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Education and Practice. European
Conference of Schools of SW,
Oporto, Portugal.

Novotna, G, (2024, June 25-28).
Severe Alcohol Use Disorder and
No Place to Live: Are Managed
Alcohol Programs the Way
Forward? The Art of Healing: A
new era in substance use
prevention, harm reduction,
treatment, and recovery support,
International Conference,
Thessaloniki, GR.

Jeffery, B. (2023, November 22). Rural dementia supports initiative: Update and progress. Presented at Saskatchewan Rural Dementia Action Research Summit. [virtual presentation]

Jeffery, B. Mahani, A. McIntosh, M. Novik, N. SahAkwen, N. (2023, October 26-28). Engagement of persons with lived experience of dementia in designing, implementing, and evaluating community-driven programs. Poster Presentation at the Canadian Association on Gerontology- CAG2023: Community Engaged Teaching, Research & Practice. Toronto, ON.

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Michnik, K., Alaniz-Salinas, N., Fedrau, S., Gabriel, C., Solmerano, L. & Engler-Stringer, R. (2023, May 30 – June 1). Community-based research methods & evaluation in school food programs. Canadian Association for Food Studies Annual Meeting 2023, Toronto, ON.

Mahani, A., Lyeo, J.S., Fung, A., Husack, K., Muhajarine, N., Diener, T., Brown, C., Ali, S., Zahid, S. (2024). What are the Barriers to Building Healthy Cities and Communities: Perspectives from the City of Regina, Saskatchewan. Poster Presentation at CAHSPR (Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research) Conference. May 14-16, 2024. Ottawa, Ontario.

Novik, N. (December 4, 2023). Medical Assistance in Dying. Volunteer Training Presentation [Zoom].Prairie Hospice Society Inc. Saskatoon, SK.

Novik, N. (March 16, 2023). Reducing the stigma of dementia: Lessons from rural Saskatchewan. Regina, SK: Bushwakkers Brew Pub. Novik, N. (September 25, 2023). Dementia supports in rural Saskatchewan: Project overview. SK Abilities Environmental Scan and Collaborative Discussion Meeting. Yorkton, SK

Novotna, G. (2023). Advancing Community Wellbeing: Research Program of the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit [SPHERU]. City of Regina: Invited Research Presentations, Canada

Okpalauwaekwe, U., Merriman, H.P., Smith, H.T., Mahani, A., Kusheriuk, M., Ermel, D., Osman, M., Yu, J., MacLean, C., Witt, J., Oyedokun, T., Fehr, C., Muller, A., MacLean, B., Balezantis, L., MacPhee, B., Campbell, J., Reis, O., Roodt, J., Smith, S., Wong, M., Hosain, J., Lawrence, K., Ruddy, G., Gordon, J., Opikokew-Wajuntah, C., Zarzeczny, A., Karnitsky, M., Ge, F., Daniel-Whyte, S., Ramsden, VR., Baerwald, A. (2023). Development of an Evidence-Informed Strategy for Primary Care Recruitment and Retention in Saskatchewan, Canada, Poster Presentation at 51st NAPCRG Annual Meeting. October 30 - November 3, 2023. Hilton San Francisco Union Square in San Francisco, California (USA).

Ruetz, A. T., Engler-Stringer, R., Doyle, E., Weber, N., Korten, Dana., & Michnik Kaylee. (2023, May 30 – June1). Exemplary school food programs roundtable. Canadian Association for Food Studies Annual Meeting 2023, Toronto, ON.

Shakotko, T., Foster, S., Engler-Stringer, R., Read, E., St-Denis, P. & Quinn, S. (2023, May 29 – June 1). School food, teacher roles. Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Food Studies, Toronto, ON.

Interviews

Camillo, C. (2023, September 13). Questions raised about radio silence from political, health leaders on COVID iPolitics, Teresa Wright. https://www.ipolitics.ca/news/questions-raised-about-radio-silence-from-political-health-leaders-on-covid

Camillo, C. (November 8, 2023). The trouble finding COVID shots. CTV National News

Camillo, C. (November 10, 2023). How to protect oneself from COVID-19. Newstalk 610 CKTB Niagara in the Morning. https://www.iheartradio.ca/610cktb/audio/steph-vivier-w-cheryl-camillo-covarr-net-university-of-regina-1.20541600?mode=Article

Camillo, C. & Muhajarine, N. (November 14, 2023). Sask research finds vaccine mandates' effectiveness varies by age. Saskatoon Star Phoenix. https://thestarphoenix.com/news/saskatchewan/sask-research-finds-vaccine-mandates-effectiveness-varies-by-age

Fuller, D. (2024, February 1). The Apple Watch May Have a Calorie Problem. The Atlantic, Caroline Mimbs Nyce. https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/02/activity-trackers-calories-fitness/677320/.

Fuller, D. (2023, November). ACFAS. Les péripéties d'une décennie de recherche avec les municipalités canadiennes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f69oqOJfUFA.

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Fuller, D. (2023, June 27).CBC News by Dayne Patterson. Saskatoon council shelved bike corridor on street where cyclist later killed by cement truck. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/city-council-shelved-bike-corridor-intersection-cyclist-killed-cement-truck-1.6888759. June 27, 2023.

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Acknowledgements

SPHERU thanks our many funders, collaborators, researchers, student interns, doctoral and postdoctoral candidates, staff and the host of participants for making our research landscape the vibrant space it continues to be. Special acknowledgement to our funders and partners:

- Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- City of Regina
- City of Saskatoon
- City of Saskatoon & Saskatchewan Health Authority
- City of Yorkton
- Dr. Allison Cammer (USask
- Employment & Social Development Canada
- Godfrey Dean Art Gallery
- Ministry of Health

- New Horizons for Seniors Program
- RaDAR (USask)
- Sakitawak Elders Group (USask), Dr. Allison Cammer (USask)
- SaskAbilities (Yorkton)
- Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF)
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)
- University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine

Thank you!





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