

Bits & Bites: A Monthly Update for District Foundation Representatives

RTO/ERO Foundation

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Beyond Bones: Building Educational Bridges between Orthopedic Surgery and Geriatrics

2016 Geriatric Training – Grantee Profile

As a young medical school student, Vicky Chau realized early on in her learning that she wanted to pursue a career in geriatric medicine. She felt so passionately about the field of geriatrics that she even came to speak at Spring Senate 2013 to endorse the campaign for the RTO/ERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine.

During her presentation, she shared what many RTO/ERO members already knew and experienced – that medical trainees often felt that their educational experiences were inadequate to help care for the elderly even though a majority of patients they saw were older adults.

Fast forward to 2016.

Dr. Vicky Chau, and her colleague Dr. Karen Ng (also a geriatrician), successfully applied for and have received RTO/ERO Foundation funding of just under \$25,000 for a very special one-year project. Working out of Mount Sinai Hospital, they are methodically and rigorously evaluating a first-of-its-kind mandatory "Orthogeriatrics" rotation now required of all first year University of Toronto Orthopedic Surgery residents. This "Orthogeriatrics" partnership was first conceived in 2014 when the Orthopedic Surgery Program Director, Dr. Peter Ferguson, and the Department Head of Geriatrics, Dr. Samir Sinha, came together to creatively bridge the gap between the specialties.

"As far as we know, this is the first time in Canada that geriatrics training has become incorporated as a required rotation for an Orthopedic Surgery residency program." -- Dr. Vicky Chau



The Foundation is pleased to be a supporting partner of the Hamilton Seniors Isolation Impact Plan, through our grant of \$50,000.

The project is a collaboration between seven community organizations in the Greater Hamilton Area, and aims to create a model that will guide the identification and engagement of isolated seniors in communities across Canada.

The project will focus initially on seniors in targeted neighbourhoods where risk factors for isolation including living alone, disability, poor health, language barriers, poverty, and lack of access to services and natural supports are most prevalent.

The grant will be used to create a Social Participation Fund that helps seniors with expenses related to accessing services and activities in the community.

Learn more about social isolation as a barrier to healthy and active living at www.embrace-aging.ca.

OUR NEW WEBSITE IS NOW AVAILABLE!

Visit us at www.embrace-aging.ca to learn more about how your support is improving the quality of life of aging adults!

Use caution with drugs for dementia symptoms: Dr. Paula Rochon, RTO/ERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine

Scientists have found that a type of drug used to treat symptoms of dementia can have harmful effects, including falling, confusion, dependence, and now — pneumonia.

In some cases, doctors prescribe benzodiazepines and related drugs known as Z-drugs to patients with dementia who wander, have sleep disturbances or show physical aggression.

However, recent studies have raised concerns about prescribing these medications because of their association with falls that cause fractures, worsened cognitive function and dependence that can lead to withdrawal if they're stopped.

A new study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) found the drugs were associated with a slightly higher risk of severe pneumonia resulting in hospital admission or death.

“This finding is an example of a prescribing cascade, where a new drug therapy causes a new medical condition, leading to yet another drug therapy.”

Dr. Paula Rochon, RTO/ERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine

Dr. Rochon, who developed the concept of the prescribing cascade, recommends that clinicians try non-pharmacological treatments before prescribing one of these drugs. Activities that keep older adults active and promote better sleep, reminiscence therapy, and reorienting dementia patients with items in their vicinity, such as a clock, a calendar or photos of their family, can help address the symptoms of dementia.

For those who are prescribed benzodiazepines or Z-drugs, the study reinforces the need for medication reviews. Dr. Rochon is vigilant with medication reviews as a new drug therapy for a symptom caused by the first, creating a prescribing cascade.



“Your new action item has me so interested in what the Foundation is doing.

I was a little unsure about social isolation related to seniors because seniors have so many problems.

But I am learning about the negative impact on health related to isolation and now I am so passionate to raise awareness on this topic.”

Joyce Boston, RTO/ERO member District 43,
Foundation donor since 2011



Thank you to Johnson Inc. for conducting a “quote” campaign to raise funds for the Foundation.

During the winter season, Johnson donated \$20 to the Foundation for each quote they provided to RTO/ERO members for auto and home insurance.

The cheque presented for \$5,260 will add to the already generous support received from Johnson Inc.