

Connecting the dots



Supporting diabetes patients with complex conditions

What type of medications are diabetes patients taking? How is diabetes managed in the frail elderly? As Ontario considers how to address these complex health conditions in a complex health system, a first-of-its-kind collaboration between OSSU and two SPOR groups, **Better Access and Care for Complex Needs (BeACCoN)** and **Diabetes Action Canada**, aims to help. The project will segment data from ICES to understand diabetes needs in different populations and identify those who would benefit from targeted care.

By segmenting data, researchers can organize large health databases to focus on specific populations, allowing customization, automation, and flagging of high-risk patients.

“Each population has different needs and different approaches for managing diabetes,” says Minnie Ho, ICES. “If we can focus on certain populations in this segmentation project and determine how their diabetes needs differ, we can develop better approaches to managing their disease.”

For those living with diabetes, being able to connect and act on this data is seen as invaluable in managing their condition. “Patients want to know when

they need to be screened, or if their risks should mean seeing a specialist”, says Conrad Pow, Diabetes Action Canada. “By combining all this data and linking it to patient needs, we can make a huge difference in the lives of those with diabetes.”

“Rapid access to timely data is critical for health system stakeholders,” says Kristen Pizul, BeACCoN. “This collaboration allows researchers and policy-makers to get answers to questions within 72 hours, which helps with planning and service delivery.”

One example of the value of this approach is at the Toronto Central LHIN, which used segmented ICES data to reveal that 70% of COPD patients had hypertension, aiding in planning programs to decrease admissions. Other examples extending primary care after hours for vulnerable people and embedding social workers to divert patients from emergency departments.

This is the first time a SPOR SUPPORT Unit, provincial Primary Care Network and a national Chronic Disease Network have collaborated to improve patient health. The partnership underscores OSSU's role as a catalyst for patient-oriented research, connecting groups to work together in new ways to tackle health care issues.

NEWS



Congratulations once again to **Dr. Jeremy Grimshaw**, Ottawa Methods Centre and Provincial KTE Network (an OSSU centre), recipient of the 2018 Canadian Institutes of Health Research's (CIHR) Barer-Flood Prize for Health Services and Policy Research. The award recognizes Dr. Grimshaw's outstanding career dedicated to promoting the use of research evidence in day-to-day clinical practice. The CIHR Barer-Flood Prize is a career achievement award that honours an exceptional scientist who has contributed significantly to research into improving how health care services are organized and delivered.

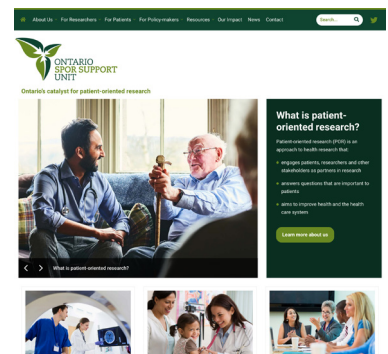


OSSU will be announcing the winners of two requests for proposals:

- A new **Research Centre on Aging** to support and advance patient-oriented research focusing on issues of aging and health. It will become the 14th research centre in OSSU's network.
- The **EMPOWER Awards** (Engaging Multi-stakeholders for Patient-Oriented research Wider Effects and Reach) provide structure and funding to help existing patient-oriented research projects increase impact.

Successful applicants for both proposals will be notified in March 2019.

Find patient-oriented research resources and more on our new website. www.ossu.ca



Primary care patient-oriented research



For primary care research teams, a new online training program will provide the building blocks for conducting patient-oriented research. The Patient-Oriented Research Training and Learning – Primary Health Care (PORTL-PhC) program includes patient priorities, methods of engaging patients in primary health

care research, skills development and more. It was developed with input from patient partner Lorraine Bayliss with support from OSSU, INSPIRE-PhC, Centre for Rural and Northern Research and the Patient Engagement Resource Centre.

“Lorraine’s contribution to the development of PORTL-PhC has been incredibly

valuable,” says Dr. Amanda Terry, Principal Investigator. “We would not be the team we are without her insights, ideas and dedication.”

Contact Rob Van Hoorn: rvanhoo@uwo.ca for more information.

Patients driving epilepsy research



Epilepsy affects more than 90,000 people of all ages and backgrounds in Ontario alone, yet there has never been a research priority-setting exercise in Canada until now. A new patient-oriented project led by the Ontario Brain Institute (OBI), an OSSU Research Centre, will generate innovative ideas and mobilize funding for this underfunded condition.

OBI and EpLink, its epilepsy research program, will work with the community to identify the top 10 questions that matter most to patients and their care providers, using the James Lind Alliance approach that was successful in OBI’s previous work with the POND Network on neurodevelopmental disorders.

Both epilepsy and neurodevelopmental disorders, like autism, were selected because of a mismatch between questions researchers were investigating and those asked by the patient community. “Without a process like this, it’s very hard

to get broad representation from the patient community about their concerns and what should be investigated,” says Jordan Antflick, Manager, Knowledge Translation, OBI. “You get really novel questions out of these priority-setting exercises that can help spur research and funding.”

The goal is to develop patient-derived priorities over the next 12 to 18 months, checking these against existing evidence to hone in on topics to research. The team hopes the results will catalyze funding for epilepsy research.

“This is true patient-oriented research; we are answering the questions patients and the community think are important,” says Jordan. “It’s an opportunity to engage the epilepsy community to identify priorities and then work with advocacy groups and other partners to find funding, champion the knowledge and raise awareness.”

New investigator training



New investigators and trainees are now better schooled in patient-oriented research, thanks to a recent training event hosted by the Population Health Research Institute (an OSSU Centre) in Hamilton. Veteran researchers provided strategies, tools and practices about how to be effective patient-oriented researchers. The workshop was based on lessons learned by researchers and patient partners, published in a special supplement *Engaging Patients in Health Research: the Ontario Experience* in CMAJ (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

OSSU will host more similar training sessions in other parts of Ontario. Stay tuned for more details at www.ossu.ca.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 26** Clinical Trials Ontario (CTO) – Consenting Patients with Confidence: A Workshop for Research Coordinators; CTO Patient Workshop, Toronto
- March 27–28** CTO Conference: Clinical Trials Today and Tomorrow, Toronto
- April 8–12** Practicing Knowledge Translation (PKT) Workshop, Toronto
- May 23–August 1** Virtual Masterclass, McMaster Health Forum, via Webex

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