

Population Health and Aging Rural Research Centre



Summer 2025

Mapping Brain Health and Dementia Research Across Canada

Dr. Juanita-Dawne Bacsu and her team of researchers were recently awarded a grant by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research - Institute of Aging to lead a national project aimed at mapping brain health and dementia research across Canada to identify gaps, existing evidence, and areas for innovation. This comprehensive project includes an environmental scan of dementia research centers, a scoping review of reviews, and focus groups with members of the Dementia Research and Innovation Funders Alliance ("the Alliance") in Canada. The project builds on the 2019 National Dementia Strategy, which laid the groundwork for advancing prevention, treatment and diagnosis, and quality of life for people with dementia. Through this work, the team will develop actionable insights to support innovation and strategic collaborations to advance dementia research in Canada. The team will share preliminary results at the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging's Conference this October, followed by a presentation to the Alliance this November.

Addressing Stigma of Dementia on Social Media Workshop

The PHARR Centre hosted a workshop on May 14th, 2025 to explore strategies for addressing dementia-related stigma on social media. Funded by the Alzheimer Society of B.C. and MSHR, the event brought together people with lived experience, community leaders, health professionals, and policy makers to challenge online misinformation and stereotypes. The workshop featured panel discussions, poster presentations, and collaborative sessions to identify innovative strategies for addressing dementia-related stigma on social media. The workshop's findings will be disseminated through a report, a journal publication, and a video.



Stigma of Dementia on Social Media Workshop

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Keynote Highlights: Summerland Memory Café

Dr. Bacsu was invited to give the keynote at the Memory Café event in Summerland, BC on May 28th, 2025. Hosted by Dementia Friendly Communities, the Memory Café event provided a welcoming space for individuals living with dementia or cognitive decline, their families, care partners, and community members to come together through music and creative activities to share information about dementia.

Memory Cafe, Summerland 2025



At the event, Dr. Bacsu shared insights from her research on dementia-related stigma and rural aging. A sincere thanks to all who attended, and a special acknowledgement to Christine Aiken, an inspiring speaker with lived experience, for sharing her powerful story on dementia-related stigma.

Celebrating Student Success: Megan Funk

Congratulations to the PHARR Centre's research assistant and masters of nursing student Megan Funk, who graduated this spring and was awarded the Governor General's Gold Medal. Megan also led her first journal publication on falls prevention in rural communities and received the CIHR Master's Award for her outstanding research.

PHARR Centre Research Opportunities

Explore opportunities to join the following research studies:

- Dr. Melba D'Souza is recruiting participants for her study on breast cancer navigation. Have you had a recent diagnosis or treatment of breast cancer? Do you live in a rural or remote area of the interior region of British Columbia, Canada? Your voice matters and will contribute to the BC Cancer Study. For more information, please contact Melba D'Souza at: 604-751-6672 or email: mdsouza@tru.ca
- Kate Nanson, BSN is examining the impact of wildfires on rural healthy aging in the Thompson Cariboo Shuswap Region of British Columbia. This study is open to adults (aged 60+), living in a rural community with concerns or perspectives on wildfires who wish to share their views or experiences. For more information about the study, please contact Kate Nanson at: nansonk11@mytru.ca.

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