



SASKATCHEWAN RESEARCH CHAIR IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIA AWARDED TO SASKATOON RESEARCHER



The newly appointed Saskatchewan Research Chair in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia, Dr. Darrell Mousseau, talks about his research into a link between Alzheimer's disease and depression at a well-attended news conference in Regina on April 6th. Photo provided by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation.

University of Saskatchewan researcher Dr. Darrell Mousseau has accepted the Saskatchewan Research Chair worth \$1 million over the next five years to study a link between Alzheimer's disease and depression.

The Chair is a partnership of the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation. Each funding partner provides \$100,000 per year for five years, while the University of Saskatchewan provides the necessary infrastructure and support for the Chair.

Dr. Mousseau is a professor in the College of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry at the University of Saskatchewan, and the former vice-president of the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan board.

He and his team have found that an enzyme that plays an important role in depression can severely weaken brain cells and perhaps trigger the

neurodegenerative processes that lead to Alzheimer's disease. The team will also look at the role of anti-depressants in this process.

"With depression affecting eight per cent of the general population, I worry that more and more will develop Alzheimer's or dementia at even younger ages," says Dr. Mousseau.

Dr. Mousseau says that the next steps will be to find a way to detect the disease in its very early stages and develop treatments to slow or even prevent it.

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Alzheimer Society
SASKATCHEWAN

Annual General Meeting

Saturday, June 5, 2010

9:00 – 11:00 am

Hotel Saskatchewan Radisson Plaza

Blue Lounge – 2nd Floor

2125 Victoria Avenue

Regina, Saskatchewan

Evidence-Based Development and Validation of the Pain Assessment Checklist for Seniors with Limited Ability to Communicate-II (PACSLAC-II)

A Research Presentation by:

Sarah Chan, M.A., Doctoral Student in Clinical Psychology
Department of Psychology, University of Regina
Alzheimer Society Research Award Recipient

Volunteer Recognition and Awards

Honourary Lifetime Membership Award

Marlene Rodie, Regina

Philanthropic Leadership Award

Evelyn Hopkins, Regina

Volunteerism Award

Trudy Retzleff, Kyle

Corporate Leadership Award

Avison Young – Commercial Real Estate, Regina

Coffee, Tea and Continental Breakfast will be served

**For more information, please call the Alzheimer Society at
949-4141 in Regina or toll-free at 1-800-263-3367**

The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan is committed to protecting the privacy of people whose personal information is collected and held by us, and we adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. If at any time you wish to have your name removed from this or another mailing, contact us at 306-949-4141 or toll free at 1-800-263-3367, or via e-mail at dbowler@alzheimer.sk.ca and we will gladly accommodate your request.

Saskatchewan Research Chair

(continued from cover page)



A proud day for (left to right): Jim Thornhill, University of Saskatchewan Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies; Sandra Weekley, Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan Board President; Joanne Bracken, Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan CEO; Dr. Darrell Mousseau, Saskatchewan Research Chair in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders; Honourable Bill Hutchinson, Government of Saskatchewan; June Bold, Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation CEO; Terry Baker, Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation Board Chair. Photo credit: SHRF

He adds, "This is really a wonderful opportunity to bring in students and high quality post-doctoral researchers. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that it is going to take us to the next level."

Joanne Bracken, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan, is optimistic that Dr. Mousseau's research will help unlock the secrets of Canada's second most feared disease – an epidemic that threatens to overwhelm the healthcare system.

"Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's disease and related disorders and our hope is the work of Dr. Mousseau and his team will bring us significantly closer to making this vision a reality," she says.

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation CEO June Bold, says "Alzheimer's disease is a huge health issue for our province, but also for the rest of Canada. With this Saskatchewan Research Chair, we hope to help Saskatchewan researchers take a lead role in finding the causes and a cure for this devastating disease."

If you would like to contribute to the fight against Alzheimer's disease and related dementia by supporting research, please contact:

Kristina Gebhard
Fund Development Manager
kgebhard@alzheimer.sk.ca
Toll free 1-800-263-3367 or
949-4141 in Regina.

Saskatchewan Researcher Receives Alzheimer Society Doctoral Research Award



University of Regina clinical psychology doctoral student Sarah Chan is the recipient of an Alzheimer Society of Canada research award in the "Quality of Life" stream. Her project will focus on pain assessment in older adults with dementia living in long-term care, with a view to revise and validate the Pain Assessment Checklist for Seniors with Limited Ability to Communicate (PACSLAC). The undermanagement of pain in older adults with dementia is a significant problem for those living and working in long-term care facilities. As verbal capacity declines, the ability to self-report pain also diminishes, placing a greater responsibility on staff to identify pain. Under-detection of pain in older adults with dementia leads to a lack of or reduction in pain intervention, and increases disruptive and aggressive behaviours in residents, as well as stress in care staff. PACSLAC has been found to be one of the most valid and reliable tools of its kind. When used regularly by long-term care nurses, pain management for older adults with dementia increased, pain behaviours decreased, and nurse distress and burnout decreased.

Ask Dr. Jack

Dr. Jack Diamond, Alzheimer Society of Canada Scientific Director answers your questions

I heard there was a vaccine for Alzheimer's disease that was pulled because it caused adverse effects. Has there been any further development on a vaccine?

Vaccines are treatments designed to stimulate the body's immune system to make antibodies against a potentially harmful agent (a substance or an organism), or to simply provide such antibodies ready made. The antibodies recognise the threatening agent and in effect neutralise it, rendering it harmless so that it can be carried off by special cells of the immune system. In "active immunization" the vaccines actually contain the threatening substance itself, but modified so that its toxic character is eliminated, while preserving its basic structure to be recognised by the immune system. The antibodies created against the modified agent then work against the original still harmful agent present in the body. In "passive immunization" the needed antibodies are already present in the vaccine, extracted either from animals, or from cells isolated from the body and kept alive in a nutrient broth.

Vaccines against "A-beta"

A-beta is the normal protein that unfortunately accumulates in the Alzheimer brain and is toxic to nerve cells. The first vaccine that "targeted" A-beta was tested in 2000, but was stopped in 2002 because a few of the treated patients developed a life-threatening inflammation of the brain. The chemists who contributed to the design of the new vaccines being tested in ongoing clinical trials (40 such trials, involving 20,000 patients!) are confident that the new antibodies do not contain the part of the molecule

that is believed to have triggered the brain inflammation.

Estimated time to approval for administration to patients: 4-6 years

Vaccine against the abnormal "tau" protein

Tau is a protein inside nerve cells that acts like a kind of railway line, moving essential substances up and down nerve fibres. In Alzheimer's disease certain chemical reactions are initiated that alter the character of tau, causing it to pile up in "tangles" that in effect choke the cell to death. A vaccine now in early clinical trial prevents the chemical reaction that makes the tau protein abnormal.

Estimated time to approval for administration to patients: 7-10 years

Are there any new medications on the horizon for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease in the later stages?

In addition to the vaccine possibility, two other kinds of drugs are currently being tested for their ability to help prevent the accumulation of the A-beta protein in the Alzheimer brain. These drugs could be anticipated to work at later stages of the disease, but this will need to be tested.

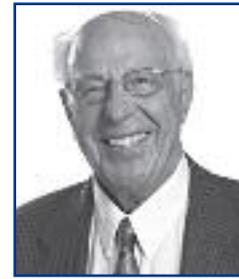
Secretase inhibitors

These drugs block enzymes which normally split off the A-beta molecules from a big "parent" protein called APP, thereby reducing A-beta production.

Estimated time to approval for administration to patients: 3-5 years

Anti-oligomer drugs

These drugs combine with the A-beta



molecules and prevent them from sticking together. A-beta is only toxic to any great extent when the molecules have combined in two's, three's or four's (these combinations are called "oligomers").

Estimated time to approval for administration to patients: 3-5 years

Two different drug types are being studied that do not target the A-beta protein, but target other systems affected in Alzheimer's disease.

Anti-calcium drugs

Calcium tends to enter any sick cells, exacerbating their problems even further and eventually killing them. Drugs which can prevent calcium from accumulating inside brain cells already suffering from the adverse effects of A-beta and abnormal tau protein help free up repair mechanisms inside the cells to undertake their normal beneficial functions.

Estimated time to approval for administration to patients: 4-6 years

Mitochondrial support drugs

Mitochondria are tiny but critically important organelles inside cells; they regulate the energy needs of the cells. In Alzheimer's disease the mitochondria begin to degenerate as the nerve cells become sicker and sicker, putting the cells even further at risk. The new drugs are designed to support the health of the mitochondria and maintain their normal functioning.

Estimated time to approval for administration to patients: 5-7 years

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Ask Dr. Jack

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Has research proven Aricept to be beneficial in the later stages of dementia?

There may be some Aricept trials going on using more advanced Alzheimer patients, but I don't know of them. Drugs like Aricept tend to be effective only at early stages, when the nerve cells in the brain are becoming sick. Nerve cells communicate with each other by releasing tiny blips of chemical substances called "transmitters" which carry the messages across the junctions between the cells. The transmitter used by the nerve cells involved in memory and learning is called "acetylcholine", and after it's done its job it is immediately broken down by an enzyme called cholinesterase (if the transmitter were not immediately eliminated the messages would build up and up and up, and eventually there would be seizures!). As the Alzheimer's disease progresses the nerve cells become sicker and sicker, until they can't make enough transmitter to carry the messages across to the next cell. Aricept-like drugs block the cholinesterase, allowing the reduced amounts of transmitter to build up to levels that are enough to get messages across the junction. But as the disease progresses, the already sick nerve cells die, and the manufacture of transmitters ceases. And that's when Aricept treatment ceases to be effective too.

What treatment options are available for a person diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia?

I'm afraid there aren't any. Behavioural problems (depression, aggression) can sometimes be helped by anti-psychotic drugs etc, but unfortunately, not always.

STAFFING NEWS

There are lots of new faces at the Alzheimer Society this spring, as well as a couple of familiar ones looking quite excited about their new positions.

Staff with new duties include:

Trina Hodel has joined the Fund Development team as the new Donor Relations Coordinator. She will work primarily on donor relations, database management and prospect research.

Marni Hatcher has accepted the newly created Executive Assistant position. She will assist the CEO, Board and Leadership Team.

Joining the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan are:

Jennifer Schoeck, who lives in Dundurn, joins the Saskatoon office as the First Link Coordinator during Evangeline Patkau's temporary absence. She has 10 years nursing experience, a Master's degree in Psychology and has worked as a counsellor in Northern British Columbia.

Jillian Higgins recently moved to Regina from Saint John, New Brunswick. A graduate of St. Thomas University with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Gerontology and Sociology, Jillian has both professional and volunteer experience working seniors living in long term care facilities. As the Society's Administrative Assistant, Jillian fulfills reception and receipt preparation duties.

Daina Braun, our new Administrative Coordinator is responsible for Accounts Receivable and Payable, as well as office operations. Daina has a Bachelor of Psychology from the University of Regina, an Office Education Certificate from SIAST, and a wide range of work experience.

Chris McLaughlin joins the Fund Development team as the Annual Giving Coordinator. He hails from southern Ontario and holds a Bachelor of Arts from Wilfrid Laurier University and a Graduate Certificate in Project Management from Royal Roads University. Chris has considerable experience working and volunteering in the not-for-profit sector.

Want a say in Alzheimer Society activities?

Get your Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan Membership today!

At just \$15, it's a real bargain and the only way to secure your voting rights at the Annual General Meeting on June 5, 2010.

Call us at 949-4141 in Regina or toll free at 1-800-263-3367

or visit www.alzheimer.sk.ca



Understanding Diversity in Dementia Care

Alzheimer Society Provincial Conference

The Kaleidoscope of Care: *Understanding Diversity in Dementia Care* conference is slated for September 28 and 29th at the Delta Regina Hotel.

Currently in the planning stages, the conference will have a balance of sessions that address the needs of people living in the community as well as those in long-term care. Evidence-based research provides the foundation for at least half of the conference program.



Dr. J. B. Orange

Keynote speaker Dr. J.B. Orange will present *Enhancing Personhood via Communication Strategies for Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Their Caregivers*. Dr. Orange is Associate Professor and the Director of the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Western Ontario, London Ontario. Dr. Orange's publications and research address language and cognitive-communication disorders of adults and older adults, with a special emphasis on discourse, conversation, and communication

of individuals with various forms of dementia and their family caregivers. His current research projects include the analyses of language, discourse, and conversation of people living with Alzheimer's disease, aphasia, fronto-temporal lobe dementia, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. His work also includes communication enhancement education and training programs for family caregivers of individuals with dementia.

The second Keynote speaker has not been confirmed.

Additional sessions will include a personal story of living with dementia and a presentation by Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan CEO Joanne Bracken and Alzheimer Canada CEO Kelly Duffin on *The Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia in Canada*, a report on the increasing incidence and prevalence of dementia and the associated personal, financial and societal cost over the next 30 years.

The motivational closing session will feature Jayne Clendening on *Laughter - Just for the Health of It*. Jayne is an internationally certified Laughter Teacher, Keynote Speaker and Therapeutic Clown. She is committed to pursuing emotional and physical well-being through laughter and play. Scientific studies show there is nothing like a good laugh to burn calories, reduce blood pressure, relieve stress

and depression, and boost the immune system. Jayne uses fun, simple exercises to stimulate laughter without jokes or humour.

The second Alzheimer Society **Spotlight on Research** evening will be held in conjunction with the Annual Provincial Conference on the evening of Monday, September 27th. Dr. Darrell Mousseau, the new Saskatchewan Research Chair in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia will deliver the keynote address, and Saskatchewan-based researchers whose work focuses on Alzheimer's disease and dementia will be on hand to answer questions about their poster presentations.

In addition, a workshop for our volunteer support group facilitators will be held on the evening of September 28th. This will be an interactive workshop with a focus on developing skills that will increase the participants' effectiveness in their role as a Support Group Facilitator.

Conference brochures and registration materials will be available on the Society's website in July and as paper copies in August.



HEALTHY BRAIN TIP

*Presented by
Fries Tallman Lumber*

Spring Cleaning can lower your risk of dementia

Research has shown there is a strong link between stress and depression, and between depression and an increased risk of dementia.

One source of stress that may be going unrecognized is a messy, cluttered home. Home should be a place where we feel calm and safe, but clutter can make us feel the opposite. Whether we clean out the storage room or rake the leaves, clearing unwanted clutter can improve our stress level.

It may seem impossible to de-clutter an entire house, and part of the challenge is getting it all done. Instead of doing it all in one day or weekend, try tackling one room at a time. If that's too much, do a closet or a corner. Even if you only spend a few minutes each day sorting through, giving away or tossing unwanted items, before you know it, the clutter will be gone.

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Brains**

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**Our goal: \$1.5 million across Canada,
one cup at a time!**

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Each day thousands of Canadians take a moment
to enjoy a cup of coffee.

This September, join the Annual Nationwide
Alzheimer Coffee Break® and make your coffee count.

Host a coffee break in your community to raise awareness and
funds that will help us discover how to prevent
Alzheimer's disease, cure it, and improve the lives of those
who are forced to live with it.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are everyone's concern.
You can make a difference.

To find out more, please call Pam at 1-877-651-0260.



Yes! I want to make change happen in Saskatchewan

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Thank you.

MISSION STATEMENT

"To alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders and to promote the search for a cause and a cure."

If someone you know requires help, if you would like further information about our organization or if you would like to make a donation, please contact the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan.

To keep current with Alzheimer Society news and programs visit the "What's New" section of our website at

www.alzheimer.sk.ca



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