Graduate Student Opportunity in:

CONnecting and Coordinating an Enhanced Network for TRansitions In Care (CONCENTRIC): A New Model for Spinal Cord Injury Care in Alberta

In Alberta, the provincial Spinal cord injury (SCI) community (i.e. persons with SCI, clinicians, decision makers, community partners, researchers) has been working together since 2016, and has agreed that improving transitions in care for persons with SCI is most important, knowing that other groups with lifelong conditions face similar challenges. Currently, there is no standardized process to facilitate transitions from the SCI inpatient rehabilitation setting to the community, and these transitions vary tremendously between providers. Should patients require specialized SCI care, they are often referred back to the SCI specialists, rather than being co-managed in their own community. Should there be any rehabilitation need in the community, there is even less support, as rehabilitation clinicians in the community also have little SCI training and even less access to specialized SCI rehabilitation services. Not surprisingly, persons with SCI often recognize this as a significant issue that negatively impacts their quality of life and perceptions of the health system.

Our provincial research team plans to carry out a 4-year project that will create and test a new model for transitions in care for people with SCI. We will utilize qualitative and quantitative methods to develop and evaluate this model, under a strategy of community-based participatory research. The project will mainly be conducted at two “hub” sites, one in Calgary and one in Edmonton and two “spoke” sites, one in Lethbridge and one in Slave Lake. The evaluation will include the qualitative and quantitative assessment of persons with SCI’s health experiences, functioning, quality of life, health care services utilization and costs, as well as providers experiences and satisfaction. This project will provide various opportunities for graduate students to develop research skills or even conduct full thesis projects.

Principal Investigators: Dr. Chester Ho (Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta); Dr. Adalberto Loyola-Sanchez (Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta); Dr. Katharina Kovacs-Burns (School of Public Health University of Alberta), Rebecca Charbonneau (Cumming School of Medicine University of Calgary)

Contact Dr. Loyola-Sanchez (adalbert@ualberta.ca) directly if you are interested in contributing to this project as a graduate student. In your email include a recent CV, academic transcripts (unofficial copies accepted), English language scores (if required) and a brief expression of interest describing your interest in the project, and previous experiences relevant to the project.

Start date January 2020.