Autumn is upon us and what better time to launch the BCRRG newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide updates about the work of our members and share ideas. We also want to generate interest beyond our group in the work we do to promote quality care and reduce the disability experienced by individuals living with obesity. The BCRRG is comprised of health care professionals including nurses, occupational therapists, dietitians, physical therapists, physicians, pharmacists and researchers. Our research is guided in part by priorities identified by individuals living with obesity and therefore our team would not be complete without them (See the article on the Public Engagement Committee). This month’s newsletter contains photos and summaries of some exciting research projects and activities we have been involved in since April. These include: multiple presentations and an exhibit booth at the 2015 Canadian Obesity Summit held in Toronto; a Best Practices in Quality Care and Rehabilitation Symposium held in Edmonton attended by health care professionals and administrators from across Canada and; a Panniculus Support Garment Project Interprofessional Symposium held in Edmonton with members of our research team and industry partners from Montpellier, France. Be sure to explore the links to resources and check out our Trainee Report section to hear from our graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. I am also pleased to introduce Sophie Collins, a master’s student in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine who is also the junior editor of the BCRRG Newsletter. The newsletter will be a quarterly publication and its success is dependent on your contributions. Please send me ideas for articles, links to resources and don’t be surprised if you are asked to be a guest writer at some point.

I hope you enjoy the first edition of the BCRRG newsletter!

Mary

"Weight is a sensitive issue, and so conversations about weight must be sensitive and non-judgemental."

Dr. Arya M. Sharma, scientific director for CON-RCO.
In April 2015, we gathered a group of rehabilitation practitioners, administrators, and researchers for a national meeting on Best Practices for Bariatric Patient Care and Rehabilitation. Held at the University of Alberta, the symposium focused on establishing priorities for a provincial research strategy to improve the care and rehabilitation of patients who have severe obesity and to develop best practice guidelines that can be used in health care settings across Canada. The eighteen participants spent the day brainstorming and identifying priority areas in post-acute rehabilitation programs and discussing existing or potential solutions and strategies to improve care.

Four themes related to bariatric care and rehabilitation were addressed:

1. **Continuum of care**: developing national definitions and standards for bariatric care across the health system
2. **Equipment and design**: resource availability and design considerations for patients with bariatric needs.
3. **Healthcare professional education/training**: build capacity and competency in professionals across the health system to effectively and efficiently care for patients with bariatric needs.
4. **Healthcare system enablers**: develop databases and a bariatric registry to provide data to inform practice and research.

Key points:

1. Engagement of patients through opportunities to voice their concerns about the management of their conditions or outcomes is an important element of providing safe patient care.
2. Despite the increasing prevalence of obesity amongst rehabilitation populations, there is currently limited evidence to guide best practice.

There is no consistent protocol or standard guidelines used by rehabilitation programs to improve the care and rehabilitation of patients with obesity.

On September 21, we held an exciting symposium here at the University of Alberta. The goal of the symposium was to collaborate with the OBESINOV team to conduct research on their pannus support garment and to eventually make their garment accessible to Canadians. Research on the OBESINOV garment will evaluate its effects on activities of daily living, improvements in mobility, and overall quality of life.

Three staff members at OBESINOV travelled from Montpellier, France to join us for the event. We started the day off by giving them a tour of our facilities at the UofA, and ended the evening with a dinner joined by Dr. Sharma, surgeons, and government officials to discuss our research efforts on the panniculus support garment.

We spent the rest of the week with Estelle, Julie and Antoine, where Estelle worked tediously with ten research participants to obtain their measurements to provide them with the best suited support garment possible. Our participants were given the opportunity to choose from a wide selection of 30+ support garment styles. Short, half or full-body, velcro, front or side hook, zipper, and adjustable compression options make each custom-made support garment perfectly adapted to each patient.
In April 2015, we were privileged to participate in the Canadian Obesity Summit in Toronto, Ontario. Mary Forhan was involved in facilitating a public engagement pre-conference workshop that was effective in connecting researchers and practitioners with persons with obesity. The Canadian Obesity Network supports public involvement with their new Public Engagement Committee http://www.obesitynetwork.ca/pesc2015.

Mary, along with Chris Ferguson from Bridgeable (http://bridgeable.com/), facilitated an interactive workshop designed to increase awareness about factors in the health care environment and the health care system that restrict participation in preventative health care for persons with obesity. Participants worked together to identify areas of opportunity to improve existing service delivery, developed a prototype and storyboard solutions of what good service looks like while considering the potential impact on the patient, the health care team and health system infrastructure. We hosted a BCRRG booth in the exhibit hall and appreciated all those who stopped by to chat with us. In addition, members of the BCRRG were involved in a variety of plenary, symposia, workshop, and poster presentations.

Trainee Report:

As a newbie in the field of obesity with an interest for better understanding the complex and multifactorial conditions rooted in and stemming from obesity, it was a great experience to hear inputs from experts of different disciplines at the Bariatric Symposium. I am an exercise physiologist by training. My primary research interest is in exercise physiology that focuses on the application of exercise/physical activity to improve health status of individuals with chronic conditions, including people living with obesity. Working with Dr. Forhan as part of Bariatric Care and Rehabilitation Research Group (BCRRG) has provided me with a great opportunity to build theoretical understanding in the field of obesity. I am excited to be part of the BCRRG team and am looking forward to exploring the issues surrounding obesity!

- Post-doc trainee Tasuku Terada, PhD

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2015 Canadian Obesity Summit, Toronto

Members of our team at the 2015 Canadian Obesity Summit. Jaqueline Torti, Tasuku Terada, Wonita Janzen & Mary Forhan