2022/2023
IALH Student Award Recipients

Faria Athar (Doctoral Student, Biology)
Elaine Gallagher Award - $1,250 - For outstanding graduate students doing research on aging who will be presenting a paper or poster at a conference on aging

Project name: *Understanding the Nutritional Regulation of Aging and Reproductive Health*

Faria's research lies in understanding the cellular mechanisms of aging, its effect on the quality of life for people, and in developing sustainable strategies to manage its impact. Her project entitled *Understanding the Nutritional Regulation of Aging and Reproductive Health* aims to understand the molecular mechanisms that drive aging by uncovering genes that may uniquely affect females. Faria will use the reproductive system as a model, and focus on investigating the role nutrient-sensing pathways (i.e., insulin) and diet play in the onset of aging. Faria will be presenting her research at the American Aging Association Annual Meeting in 2023.

Jessica Percy Campbell (Doctoral Student, Political Science)
Elaine Gallagher Award - $1,250 - For outstanding graduate students doing research on aging who will be presenting a paper or poster at a conference on aging

Project name: *Aging in Place with Google and Amazon*

In October 2022, Jessica presented her research project *I Keep Saying Our House is Smarter Than We Are: A Focus Group with Older Amazon Alexa Users in Canada* at the AGE-WELL conference in Regina, SK. Jessica's research interests involve how best to protect older adults' privacy, dignity and autonomy in digital spaces. As part of her dissertation research, Jessica has been exploring how smart home devices such as Amazon Alexa and Google Home may impact the privacy of older adults in Canada. These devices can assist with aging in place, however changes in policy and design should be considered in order to protect the privacy of older adults.

Cynthia McDowell (Masters Student, Psychology)
Neena Chappell Scholarship - $1,230 - For graduate students conducting research on aging

Project name: *Longitudinal Patterns and Predictors of Cognitive Impairment Classification Stability*

Cynthia's research project entitled *Longitudinal Patterns and Predictors of Cognitive Impairment Classification Stability* will use data from a six-year longitudinal study to explore patterns of cognitive impairment in individuals who do not meet criteria for a diagnosis of dementia.

Cynthia is deeply involved in a number of initiatives designed to reduce stigma around memory loss and connect those with similar lived experiences, including the *Voices in Motion* choir and the *Call to Mind* podcast.

Ashleigh Parker (Doctoral Student, Psychology)
UVic Retirees Association Award - $1,250 - For students whose research is focused on individuals 55 years of age and older

Project name: *Earlier Detection of Alzheimer's Disease: Investigating Brain-Based Changes in Older Adults with Subjective Cognitive Decline*

Ashleigh's research project entitled *Earlier Detection of Alzheimer's Disease: Investigating Brain-Based Changes in Older Adults with Subjective Cognitive Decline* aims to investigate the relationship between magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) measures, cognitive functioning, and biomarkers in individuals with subjective cognitive decline (SCD) compared to healthy controls. By examining structural and functional MRI data, as well as biomarker and hormone levels, her objective is to identify early changes in brain structure and function associated with SCD. Detecting changes in brain structure and function before measurable decline on neuropsychological measures would be a significant advancement in Alzheimer's diesease biomarker research.
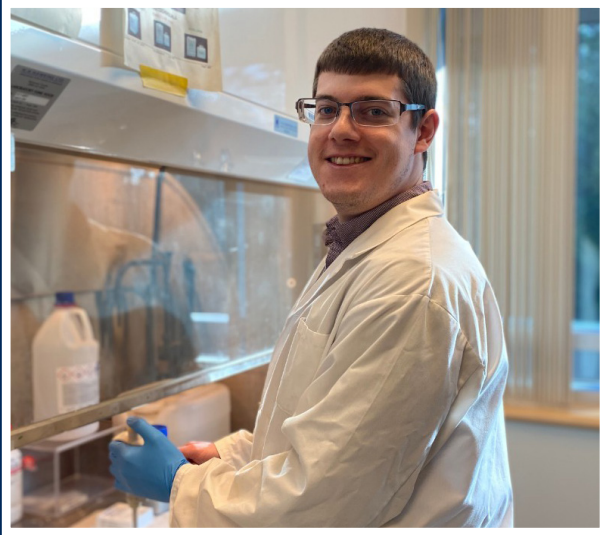
Brady Rieve (Doctoral Student, Division of Medical Sciences)
Alice Lou-Poy Graduate Scholarship - $870 - For students conducting research on Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia

Project name: *Cognitive Outcomes Following Chronic Stress and Reelin Treatment and Development of a Novel Blood-Based Biomarker for Alzheimer's Dementia*

Brady's research aims to investigate the potential benefits of Reelin, a stress-sensitive protein, in the context of major depression and Alzheimer's dementia. By inducing chronic stress in rats and administering synthetic Reelin, Brady aims to evaluate the cognitive function of the rats longitudinally. Building on existing knowledge regarding the positive effects of Reelin treatment in chronic stress models, Brady's research objective is to determine if Reelin administration can reduce cognitive decline in rats exposed to chronic stress, potentially offering a novel therapeutic approach for individuals with depression or those at risk for developing Alzheimer's dementia.

Sanjit Roy (Doctoral Student, Social Dimensions of Health)
UVic Retirees Association Award - $1,250 - For students whose research is focused on individuals 55 years of age and older

Project name: *Elder Abuse Among Canadian Veterans: A Comprehensive Examination Using the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging*

Sanjit's research aims to understand and address the issue of elder abuse among Canadian veterans, who are at a higher risk due to various factors such as health conditions, housing situations, and mental health issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). By analyzing data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA), Sanjit hopes to identify how certain characteristics like dementia or PTSD may increase the likelihood of abuse, as well as the impact of abuse on other outcomes such as early admission to long-term care. The findings from this research could be used to develop targeted strategies for preventing and addressing elder abuse, with the goal of improving the physical and mental well-being of Canadian veterans.
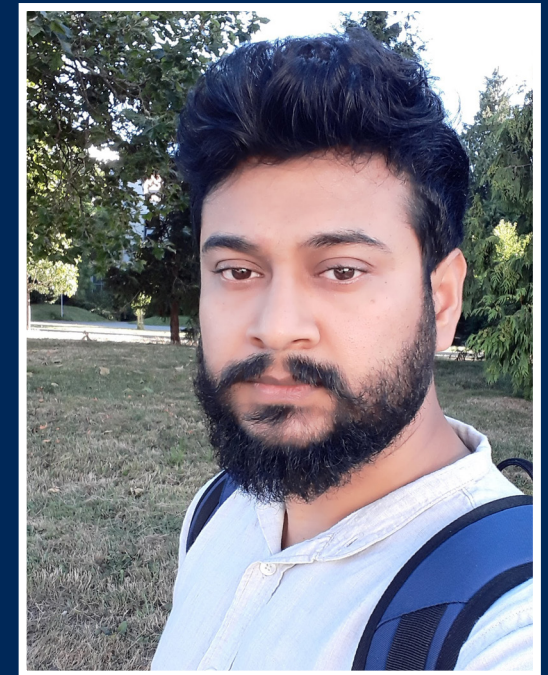
Taylor Snowden-Richardson (Doctoral Student, Division of Medical Sciences)
Ferguson Graduate Research Award in Digital Health - $10,000 - For graduate students whose research is in the area of digital health innovation and application

Project name: *Brain Gain: Identifying Candidate Dementia-Related Biomarkers and Early Intervention Strategies for Adults Aged 50+ with a History of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury*

Taylor's research looks at the association between mild traumatic brain injury (i.e. concussion) and dementia. Her research project entitled *Brain Gain: Identifying Candidate Dementia-Related Biomarkers and Early Intervention Strategies for Adults Aged 50+ with a History of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury* aims to examine how a 3-D object tracking device that can be used at home, may improve cognitive functions and dementia-related biomarkers in adults with histories of concussion, compared to other interventions such as aerobic exercise.

Audrey Tung (Doctoral Student, Geography)
Dr. David Chuenyan Lai Scholarship - $920 - For graduate students conducting research on aging whose supervisor is also affiliated with IALH

Project name: *A Room of One's Own: Holding Space for Women Who Are Underhoused*

Audrey's research project aims to address the underhousing and housing insecurity experienced by diverse older women, whose circumstances are often unrecognized and whose perspectives are undervalued. The loss of a home can have profound impacts on one's health, identity, and sense of belonging, particularly for older individuals who desire to "age in place". Using arts-based methodologies within a feminist participatory action research (FPAR) framework, Audrey hopes to: explore and understand the experiences of underhoused and overlooked older women; empower participants by developing their skills; challenge social stigma and alienation through arts-based storytelling methods; and collaboratively develop policy and service recommendations that address the specific needs of this population.