



THE IALH UPDATE

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Gifting Books to Children for a Stronger Mind in Later Years

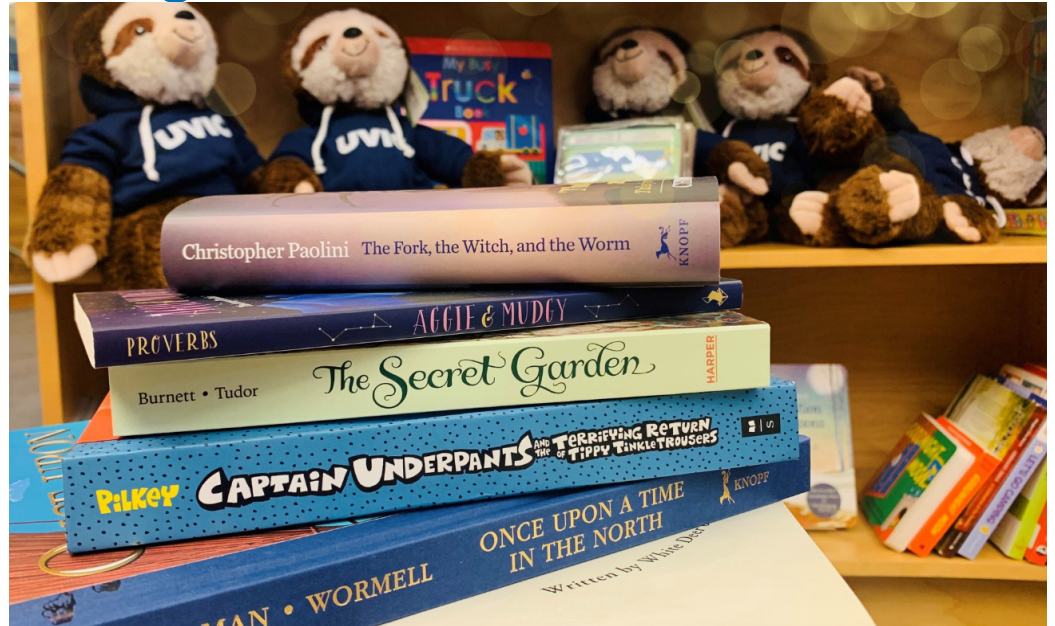
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Gifting Books to Children for a Stronger Mind in Later Years



A stack of books on display at the UVic bookstore. Credit: Ashleigh Enright

Do you have a child on your shopping list this holiday season? Consider gifting a book. Access to books in childhood may provide enhanced cognitive health throughout adulthood.

By the year 2050, it is estimated that dementia cases will triple, surpassing 150 million cases worldwide. As there is no known cure, identifying factors that may delay the onset of cognitive impairment is imperative. Various factors such as education, physical activity, and engaging in mentally stimulating activities appear to support cognitive resilience. However, little research has been done on childhood circumstances.

Past IALH Postdoctoral Fellow Nathan Lewis (Psychology) and former IALH Student Affiliate Tomiko Yoneda have recently published findings from a study exploring how access to books in childhood can support cognitive resilience in later adulthood. Scott Hofer, past IALH Director, was also a member of the research team.

For this study, the research team used data from the Survey of Health, Aging, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), a longitudinal study that began in 2004. Participants had to be 60 years old at the beginning of the study, with at least two assessment points, and demographic and retrospective life-history information.

Participants were asked to remember and share how many books were in their homes when they were 10 years old (5 categories ranging from "none or very few" to "enough to fill two bookshelves"). They were then asked the same question four years later with most participants providing a similar answer.

Cognitive function was measured using a modified version of the Telephone Interview of Cognitive Status (TICS). The modified TICS used in this study involved various tasks to assess different aspects of cognitive function. These tasks included:

- a) **Word Recall Tasks:** Participants were asked to recall a 10-word list immediately and after a delay.
- b) **Date Orientation:** Participants were tested on their orientation to date, including the year, month, day, and day of the week.
- c) **Verbal Fluency Task:** Participants were required to name as many animals as possible within a 60-second period.

Key findings from this study included:

- Having more access to books at age 10 was linked to a lower chance of developing cognitive impairment. This relationship held true even after accounting for age, sex, education, and childhood socioeconomic status.

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- Overall life expectancies were comparable for individuals who reported a high number of books and those with a low number of books in their childhood homes. However, those with higher access to childhood books tended to spend a greater proportion of their overall life expectancy without experiencing cognitive impairment.
- Policies or community efforts to increase access to such reading materials during childhood may assist in promoting cognitive resilience across the lifespan.

The team has created an infographic to illustrate their findings. The infographic can be found [here](#).

To read the full article, see <https://academic.oup.com/innovateage/article/doi/10.1093/geron/igad124/7330346>.

Congratulations

Congratulations to **Emilie Gosselin** on being the inaugural recipient of the Holly Tuokko Undergraduate Research Award. Emilie is majoring in biology with a focus on neurobiology. Her research interests include understanding the effects of stroke. Dr. Holly Tuokko was the Director of the UVic Centre on Aging (now the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health) from 2009 to 2014.

Congratulations to IALH Research Fellow **Nancy Clark** (Nursing) on being awarded a 2023 President's Chair. The President's Chair is the highest academic honour UVic can bestow on a faculty member. The position recognizes faculty who have achieved great distinction in research and research-inspired teaching, made substantial contributions to UVic and the wider community, and are deemed capable of championing excellence in research, teaching, and community-university engagement.

Congratulations to IALH Research Fellow **Helen Monkman** (Health Information Science) on being named 2023 Women Leader in Digital Health by Digital Health Canada. Helen is working towards improving consumer health information systems by making them user-friendly and easier to understand.

Congratulations to IALH Research Fellow **Mauricio Garcia-Barrera** (Psychology) and IALH Student Affiliate Cole Kennedy (Psychology) on being invited to Parliament Hill to present their research in support of a national strategy on brain injury. Mauricio leads the BC Consensus on Brain Injury. More information on their visit can be found [here](#).

Congratulations to IALH Research Fellows Marie-Ève Tremblay (Division of Medical Sciences) and Ryan Rhodes (Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education) on making [Clarivate's Highly Cited Researcher list for 2023](#).

Resources

Preventing Falls

As individuals age, their risk of falling increases. Engaging in physical activity is critical for preventing falls. Active Aging Network Canada has identified several resources related to falls prevention. For more information, go to <https://www.activeagingcanada.ca/newsletter/active-aging-network/v02-issue009-2022-11-exercise-is-one-of-the-keys-to-preventing-falls.htm>

Senior Abuse

In the summer of 2021, Employment and Social Development Canada conducted seven roundtable sessions and an on-line survey to seek input on a federal policy definition of senior abuse, to raise public awareness of the issue, and to support prevention efforts. A recent report summarizing the findings from this work can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/seniors-aging/consultation-senior-abuse-definition-results.html>. An explanatory document on the federal policy definition can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/seniors-aging/mistreatment-older-persons.html>.

Speech Language Pathologists and Communication Changes in Dementia

Hosted by the Alzheimer Society of BC, this video explores how dementia can affect an individual's ability to communicate, and how speech-language pathologists can support communication changes. For more information, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ojuhho1istg>.

Opportunities

Understanding the Needs of Caregivers Involved in At-Home Care Using SmartHome Systems for Patients with Dementia

Caregivers are often overlooked as care team members, and while individuals with dementia are living at home they bear significant responsibility. As a result, negative physical and mental health outcomes can occur, creating a barrier to efficient implementation and the use of smart technology in the home to support caregiving. Masters Student and IALH Student Affiliate Evangeline Wagner is seeking participants for a study entitled *Understanding the Needs of Caregivers Involved in At-Home Care Using SmartHome Systems for Patients with Dementia*. To be eligible, participants must:

- a non-medical caregiver of an individual with dementia who is living at home
- over the age of 19 and
- able to read, write and speak in English

Participants will be asked to complete some questionnaires and participate in an interview. The tasks will take about 30 minutes to complete.

For more information or to participate, please contact Evangeline Wagner at evangelinemwagner@uvic.ca or her supervisor Elizabeth Borycki at emb@uvic.ca.

History of Concussion Study

Taylor Snowden-Richardson, a fourth year PhD year student and IALH Student Affiliate is recruiting participants for a study exploring how concussions impact long-term brain health. To be eligible, participants must:

- be between 50 and 90 years of age
- have normal or corrected vision
- have low weekly aerobic activity (defined as less than 1 hour per week)
- be physically able to engage in 30 minutes of aerobic walking at a time.

Individuals with or without a history of concussion are invited to participate. Individuals who have had a concussion are eligible to participate if they have had at least one concussion a minimum of 1 year prior to study intake.

The study is being conducted in collaboration with IALH Research Fellows Dr. Brian Christie (Division of Medical Sciences) and Dr. Jodie Gawryluk (Department of Psychology and Division of Medical Sciences). It involves the use of Magnetic Resonance imaging (MRIs), blood and saliva collection and cognitive assessments as well as a 12-week intervention program. For more information, contact brainlab@uvic.ca using the subject "History of Concussion Study".

Upcoming Events

Cafe Scientifique: Forever Young: Brain Health and Aging

December 11, 2023 3:30 to 5:30PM PT

In person: Wildrose Room, University Club, University of Victoria
 Online: Livestreamed via Zoom

The Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health's Brain Health Research Cluster is hosting a three part Café Scientifique series entitled **Forever Young: Brain Health and Aging**. The first session will focus on cerebrovascular disorders and depression. Presenters will include IALH Research Fellows Kurt Smith (Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education) and Hector Caruncho (Division of Medical Science) as well as student trainees Tabitha Craig, Ciara Halvorson, Brady Reive, and Spencer Farstad. The event is free to attend though **registration is required**.

For more information, including registration, please visit <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/aging/events/index.php>.