



# THE IALH UPDATE

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## Shifts in Homecare Nursing Practices and Their Implications for Families and Clients Receiving Palliative Care at Home



Photo: Canva.com

Home care nurses provide critical health services to individuals living at home. Early patient discharges from hospital have shifted home care nursing practice from an emphasis on prevention to a focus on acute care management. As a result, older frail individuals and those requiring preventative or palliative care services are less likely to have timely access to home care nursing services. This, in turn, affects peoples' ability to be cared for and to die at home.

IALH Research Fellow Kelli Stajduhar (Nursing) and colleagues at the University of Victoria, Trinity Western University, the University of Manitoba, McGill University and Island Health recently published findings from a study that examined how changes in home care nursing practice affect families and individuals receiving palliative care services at home. The study addressed two questions:

- a) In what ways have home care nursing practice changed?
- b) What are the implications of these changes for clients in need of palliative care and their family caregivers?

Qualitative data were collected through focus groups and in-depth interviews with a total of 38 participants who worked in home care (29 home care nurses and 9 home care managers/clinical practice leaders).

Participants identified three impacts as a result of changing home care practice: a) the erosion of relationship-focused care; b) reduced opportunities for upstream interventions; and c) shifts in health care system priorities.

For example, participants noted fewer opportunities for "continuity in care or for the relationship and trust building required to create a safe environment for sensitive conversations." They also noted that individuals in need of palliative care services are often referred late in their disease trajectory. However, when referrals for home care are made early enough, nurses "have more capacity...to prevent crises at home, thereby reducing the likelihood of unnecessary human suffering."

In addition, participants commented on a number of systems issues that impact their work. These include increased workloads without increased resources, a reduction in the amount of time spent with clients, and pressure to teach clients and families to care for themselves. The researchers stated that "health system changes may be constraining home care nurses' abilities to enact care that is consistent with palliative care

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principles and philosophies". They also noted that "As the demand on nurses' time has increased...it has been the client, family and the nurses themselves who have paid the price."

To read the full article, go to <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37552519/>.

## Research News

The research team behind *Knowledge Implementation for Scale-Up, Spread and Sustainability of Assistive Technologies (KISS-AT)*, a project that began in 2020 has just released a video highlighting the stories and research findings from one phase of the project, entitled *Staying Apart Together*. This phase included the development of a new assistive technology using CanConnect from CanAssist, to help older adults in remote and rural BC communities remain socially connected. The project found that using communication technology can help older adults live at home, stay connected, and feel less lonely. It also made them more comfortable with technology.

The KISS-AT team includes IALH Research Fellows Denise Cloutier (Geography), Simon Carroll (Sociology), the late Karen Kobayashi (Sociology) and IALH Student Affiliate Matilde Cervantes Navarrete.

Funding for the creation of the video was provided by [Michael Smith Health Research BC](#). To watch the video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMAf1DUHldc&t=6s>.

## Resources

### Association Between Shift Work Exposure and Frailty

A wide range of negative health outcomes have been associated with shift work, particularly night and rotating shift work. To date, the effect of shift work on frailty development at an advanced age has not been fully understood. Dr. Durdana Khan recently investigated this association using data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA). She compared variables such as exposure to shift work, shift work exposure in longest job, and shift work exposure in current job. Compared to daytime workers, participants who reported exposure to shift work were associated with frailty. In particular, female participants working in rotating shifts in their longest jobs were more likely to be classified as frail compared to daytime workers. The finding that shift work may play a role in the development of frailty warrants further investigation. To view a presentation on Dr. Khan's findings, go to <https://clsa-elcv.ca/webinar-videos>.

### Retirement Hub

The Government of Canada has developed a Retirement Hub which offers a one-stop shop for those thinking about retirement. Find out about public pensions, when to collect them, and tips to consider for retirement income. For more information, go to <https://retraite-retirement.service.canada.ca/en/home>.

### Online Safety Workshop

Get Cyber Safe is hosting a free virtual event on October 24, 2023. The Discover Online Safety Workshop is open to Canadians of all ages and technical knowledge levels, but is particularly geared to adults over the age of 50. For more information go to <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/discover-online-safety-workshop-2023-get-cyber-safe-mediasmarts-tickets-687451133847?aff=oddttdtcreator>.

## Opportunities

### Volunteers Needed for Study on Vision and Attention

IALH Research Fellows Dr. Tarek Amer and Dr. Jordana Wynn are seeking individuals to participate in an Object Visual Attention Study. The goal of the study is to understand how attention guides our visual system to process everyday objects. Participants will be asked to look at various pictures of objects on a computer screen and make judgements about them while their eye movements are recorded using a remote eye tracking system.

Eligible participants must:

- Be 65 years of age or older
- Be a fluent English speaker
- Have normal or corrected-to-normal vision (no bifocal lenses)
- Not have any severe visual impairments (that is, a prescription of +/- 5.00 or higher)
- Not have a history of psychiatric or neurological disorders or head injury

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Participation will require about 2 to 2.5 hours. Participants will receive \$30 in recognition of their contribution.

For more information or to participate contact [uvic.mva.lab@gmail.com](mailto:uvic.mva.lab@gmail.com) or 250-472-5014.

## 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](mailto:brainlab@uvic.ca) using the subject "History of Concussion Study".

## Support Low-Income Seniors

Seniors' Entitlement Services provides trained volunteer advocates to support older adults, 55 and up, living in the Greater Victoria region. Advocates help low-income older adults maintain their independence. Seniors' Entitlement Services (SES) include problem solving, system navigation, assistance with applications and forms, information and referral services, and support to address elder abuse and/or unexpected hardships. SES services are free and confidential. In 2022, the SES program served 450 older adults.

SES is looking for more volunteers. Maybe that's you? SES volunteers provide direct, hands-on support to clients. SES volunteer advocates operate as a team and community-of-practice. The work is challenging and engaging. Good communication skills are essential. Training is provided. Volunteers commit 2 to 3 hours per week to SES either in-person (at Quadra Village Community Centre, where the SES program is based) and/or virtually.

To learn more or request a volunteer application form, contact Ben Ziegler, SES program coordinator, at [sescoordinator@quadravillagecc.com](mailto:sescoordinator@quadravillagecc.com) or at 250-388-7696 ext. 230.

## Upcoming Events

### Cafe Scientifique

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

The IALH Brain Health Research Cluster is hosting a three-session CIHR Café Scientifique series entitled *Forever Young: Brain Health and Aging*.

Register now for the first in-person and online session: *Integrative Perspectives of Brain Health: Focusing on Cerebrovascular Disorders and Major Depression*.

For more information and registration, visit [www.uvic.ca/aging/events](http://www.uvic.ca/aging/events).

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