



Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance

Training and Education Working Group | Member Profile



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Alliance member since 2021

Biography

I am a Clinical Exercise Physiologist and Ph.D. candidate in Applied Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba. My graduate research focuses on improving risk assessment and physical activity programming for individuals at risk or living with cardiovascular disease. My Master's research focused on the impact of physical activity intensity on cardiometabolic risk in pediatric populations. I joined the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences as a trainee in Dr. Duhamel's lab to better understand cardiovascular risk stratification, measurement, intervention design, and translational research in older clinical populations.

Navigating personal challenges has motivated me to pursue translational research to promote policy and practices to improve patient outcomes. This drive stems from my struggles after a traumatic injury in 2015, resulting in multiple surgeries to my dominant right hand and forearm. Even more so, I am inspired to make a difference because of my mother's challenges in her health journey. Much of her experience echoes the Ms. Understood Heart & Stroke report that identified our health system under diagnoses, under treats and under supports women.

To improve women's heart health, I co-developed the Women's Advanced Risk-assessment in Manitoba (WARM) Hearts Study (NCT03938155), an observational cohort examining non-invasive assessments and biomarkers to identify women who are at an elevated risk for cardiovascular events. Though, my doctoral research primarily focuses on investigating sex and gender differences in cardiac rehabilitation in Manitoba. Cardiac rehabilitation is an important support associated with reductions in mortality and morbidity, and research demonstrates that women are less likely to be referred, attend, and adhere. Understanding disparities in referrals, delays in the time to program entry, and which patients attend, adhere to, or decline cardiac rehabilitation is essential to improving transitions to this lifesaving support. As such, my research engages with stakeholders to evaluate cardiac rehabilitation quality in Manitoba. The framework and engagement I have established with stakeholders will improve data capture and evaluate alternate delivery models in the future.



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I am also a part of provincial and national initiatives promoting sex and gender integration in research and practice as a CIHR Institute of Gender and Health Manitoba Chapter Trainee Lead. I have contributed to the publication of 29 manuscripts examining the complex interactions between physical activity and health. My leadership, academic, and research potential have been acknowledged with numerous awards, including a prestigious Canadian Institute of Health Research Vanier Scholarship. I value these recognitions and strive always to enhance my skills to continue to give back. I pursue value-added training opportunities such as summer schools and leadership training to strengthen my understanding of health issues and establish partnerships to increase my research impact. To increase Manitoba's capacity to integrate physical activity assessment and prescription into medicine, I engage with healthcare students and professionals by delivering seminars and workshops. In the future, I intend to complete post-doctoral training internationally to champion translational research to address disparities in cardiovascular health outcomes.