New Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation came into effect July 1, 2014. Click here to confirm your interest in receiving our emails. Remember, email is the only way we can contact you about webinars, best practice guidelines, policy changes and research advancements that affect your practice!

You may unsubscribe if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

---

**Falls Prevention Newsletter**
**Winter 2015**

**Vision & Falls**

**Exchange ideas. Share resources. Make a difference!**

The Falls Prevention Community of Practice (CoP) brings together multiple stakeholders including front line health care workers, health system planners, researchers, policy makers, older adults and caregivers who have an interest in Falls Prevention. The goal is to improve the health and healthcare of seniors in Ontario by sharing Falls Prevention knowledge, research, best practices and resources. If you have any questions about the Falls CoP, please contact the Coordinator, Marguerite Thomas.
Message from our Co-Chair

This edition of the newsletter focuses on vision. It would seem obvious that vision problems would contribute to falls. But, do you know why and how? Did you know that it is estimated that 20% to 50% of older adults have undiagnosed vision loss? Did you know that vision slips away from us slowly, without us knowing? Mayo Clinic offers a great slide show on eye diseases and vision loss.

Vision loss can lead to depression, and a decline of activities. My own vision gradually declined a few years ago without notice. I lost interest in my hobby which is jewellery making. I did not realize that I had lost interest because it became so difficult. I could not see the small holes in the beads. Once I figured out that my difficulties were due to my sight, I had my eyes tested and started wearing reading glasses. I recently had my eyes checked again, and I need stronger reading glasses. I continue to search for my readers several times throughout the day. What about your clients/patients? Do you know if they are experiencing vision problems? Can you believe them if they tell you nothing can be done? There is a great program from Misericordia Health Centre that was developed from extensive research. It is a vision screening program that is quick and easy to implement. It is called the Focus on Falls Prevention Vision Screening Program.
Our webinar team is going to work with the Focus on Falls Prevention Vision Screening Program to deliver a webinar so you can learn more about the program, vision loss, and how to prevent falls by helping older adults to improve their vision. Enjoy the newsletter, and watch your step!

Message from our Coordinator

Our theme for the winter newsletter is vision as a risk factor for falls. For this newsletter, I contacted the Ontario Association of Optometry and was privileged to interview Dr. Susan J. Leat, PhD, FCOptom, FAAO, Professor, Head of Residencies, School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Waterloo for the Caregiver Corner section.

The website provides links to assist you in learning more about the importance of good vision care. Essential information on prevention and treatment can be found by checking out the Eye Health Library. Learn how Doctors of Optometry play an essential and ongoing role in ensuring the health of you and your family. Do you want to know the different professionals needed for vision care? Check out What is the difference: Doctors of Optometry, ophthalmologist and opticians. Keen to know more about early identification and treatment of specific conditions that often have no visible symptoms? Don’t forget Risks Associated with Sun Exposure for more valuable prevention information.

An additional resource can be found on the redesigned BrainXchange website (formerly known as Alzheimer's Knowledge Exchange). The Design and Dementia CoP offers lighting recommendations for illuminating the environment to avoid confusion and falls.

A Look at What One Program is Doing

CNIB’s Path to Change

Meet Brian Brisebois
By: Shannon Simpson

When Brian Brisebois began to lose his vision more than 13 years ago, he was concerned about maintaining his quality of life.

The 70-year-old had developed age-related macular degeneration (AMD) - an eye condition that causes damage to the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for seeing fine details such as reading print or seeing faces.

"With AMD, you are left with your peripheral vision and consequently, you can misjudge distance and location," says Brisebois. "You can bump into things, knock them over or worse - fall." Read more >>
What is happening in communities

The brainXchange

The brainXchange is a network of people dedicated to improving quality of life and supports for persons with or at risk of having brain-health needs related to dementia, mental health and neurological conditions related to aging or have experienced brain health changes earlier in life that are now more complex with aging. CDRAKE and AKE have combined activities to form this exciting new network.

Browse topics, get the latest resources, learn about upcoming knowledge exchange opportunities, and more. Connect with others in the network or get support from brainXchange staff. The Design and Dementia CoP provides valuable environmental information to prevent falls.

McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

A new resource developed at McMaster University aims to become the go-to place for Canadian citizens, clinicians, public health professionals and policymakers to access evidence-based information on optimal aging.

The McMaster Optimal Aging Portal brings together research evidence about clinical, public health and health systems questions, and presents it in various ways to convey the key messages from the research, how trustworthy it is, and how it can be acted upon. It also includes links to a wide range of other online resources that have been rated for quality. The Portal is free and easy to use, and includes several types of content designed specifically for the general public, as well as content for clinical, public health and policy professionals.

Look at what information the Portal has on vision problems!

From Research to Practice

Reading List - Vision & Falls

Please find below a comprehensive list of recent journal articles and other resources on vision and falls. To request any of these articles in full-text, please email Lindsay Ogilvie, Information Specialist for the CoP.


Reed-Jones RJ, Solis GR, Lawson KA, Loya AM, Cude-Islas D, Berger CS. Vision


View the full reading list >>

Meet a Core Team Member
Elise Kayfetz - CARP

Elise Kayfetz has big dreams for the aging world and is determined to make them a reality.

Currently working with CARP as Manager, Community Programs-A New Vision of Aging, Elise leads CARP's 60+ Chapters to make change across Canada. Working directly with CARP Chapters on the ground, Elise strives to bring CARPs Advocacy issues to every community through educational and social programming. Her recent projects include a 3-Part Series on Dementia and Caregiving (Winter - Spring 2015), Senior Moments (Winter 2015), National Seniors Day (October 2015) and Fall Prevention Month (November 2015). Read more >>

Meet a General Member
Sandy Stemp - Reena

Individuals with developmental disabilities have mobility issues that lead to falls. These include neurological issues (a significant percentage of individuals have seizure disorders) as well as side effects of medications. These issues cause poor gait and balance. As individuals age, these issues can become more pronounced. This is a huge issue since many of these individuals also have osteoporosis (due to the seizure medication). Outcomes to falls are significant with breaks and fractures, leading to hospitalization. Rehabilitation can be complicated and often people with developmental disabilities may have challenges around proper support and access to rehabilitation services.

Sandy Stemp is the Chief Operations Officer of Reena (developmental service agency in North Toronto and York region) and has worked in the field of developmental disabilities for over 25 years. Read more >>
Education and Events

Making the Most of Communication

Wednesday, March 25, 2015
9 AM - 4 PM (Registration begins at 8:30 AM)
Country View Golf Course, Chatham-Kent
Ontario
$45 includes lunch and printed materials

Toni Southern, Karin Kouvelas and Agapi Varacalli are Speech Language Pathologists working at Windsor’s John McGivney Children's Centre in the Augmentative Communication Clinic. They provide assessment, consultation, equipment recommendations and treatment for children and adults who are functionally nonverbal.

Registration and more information >>

Champions for Change


These workshops, hosted in Washington, DC, on March 24-27 and Calgary, AB, on April 15-17, will focus on providing professional development to backbone leaders and generating new insights on the work of the backbone for the field.

Both workshops will have similar content, so you can choose the one that best fits your schedule and location.

Learn more and register for the workshop in Washington, DC >>
Learn more and register for the workshop in Calgary, AB >>

Canadian Hip Fracture Management Conference

March 23-24, 2015
Renaissance Toronto Downtown

The Hip Fracture Management Conference will be the only national event to discuss practical innovations and improvement processes for the management of Hip Fractures in acute care and inpatient rehab settings, as well as long term care and community care environments.

Hear updates on policy and quality standards plus details of key national initiatives. Presentations and case studies will also cover; Perioperative care and surgery; Pain management; Osteoporosis prevention, management, & awareness; Managing dementia, delirium & depression; Functional recovery, inpatient rehabilitation & interdisciplinary care models; Care transitions; Long Term Care Guidelines; Falls prevention; and much more.

Visit the website >>
Annual Falls & Mobility Network Meeting

Save the Date
June 5, 2015
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

For more information, please contact Jeanie Zabukovec.

Ontario Gerontology Association 2015 Conference

Mark Your Calendar for the Ontario Gerontology Association’s 34th Annual Conference!

The Ontario Gerontology Association and the Regional Geriatric Programs (RGP)s of Ontario are partnering again this year to host Ontario’s premiere Conference on Aging.

The conference brings together a range of health care practitioners including physicians and geriatricians, nurses, therapists, healthcare provider organizations, administrators, researchers, long-term care homes, retirement homes, educators and clinical experts to attend in order to explore the latest programs, settings, models of care, products and services for older adults.

Registration is now open!

Exercise Prescription, Physical Activity and Aging Conference

This Canadian Conference will be held in Toronto, Ontario on May 30th & 31st, 2015 to provide you with the latest research on exercise prescription for older adults and the chronic diseases commonly seen in our older patients. If you work with fit or frail adults, whether they are young or the oldest of old, or if you work with people with conditions such as osteoporosis, arthritis, cancer, Alzheimer’s, diabetes, those on dialysis or who have had a stroke- this conference is for you. View the conference programme >>

Safer Healthcare Now! National Calls

Save the date! Safer Healthcare Now! has a full slate of National Calls scheduled for the fall on a range of topics including medication reconciliation, safe surgery to infection prevention and control.

Visit the website to see the schedule of upcoming calls. Save the dates!
Caregiver Corner

By Marguerite Thomas, Falls Prevention CoP Coordinator and caregiver

At age 65 and older, all adults should have an eye exam at least once a year. Regular exams, conducted by a Doctor of Optometry, give assurance that aging eyes are being treated by an eye health professional who can identify potential health and vision issues early.

As a caregiver, you may be responsible for a loved one who has vision issues, but who cannot clearly tell you. The slips, trips or falls that you might see could be dismissed as simply being due to clumsiness. However, it may be due to poor vision. To determine if this is likely, watch for a loved one having difficulty recognizing a face across the room, reading the newspaper or watching television, not noticing objects in their side vision, tripping over objects or hesitating at steps or changes in the flooring. Many common eye conditions do not have external signs. Glaucoma damage is irreversible, so early detection is paramount. Macular degeneration and cataracts will show no signs to the casual observer.

Dr. Susan Leat explains several aspects of vision testing that are related to falls. Read more >>

Financial Assistance for Vision Aids and Eyeglasses

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, through their Assistive Devices Program may cover:

- Optical Aids including magnifiers, telescopes and specialized glasses
- Reading And Writing Systems including audio book playback machines, closed-circuit televisions and brailers
- Mobility and Orientation Devices such as white canes

for individuals with long-term low vision or blindness that can not be corrected medically, surgically or with ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses (e.g. corrected vision in the better eye is in the range of 20/70 or less). Learn more and apply for funding >>

Seniors in need of financial assistance for standard eyeglasses may contact their local Lions Club. They are willing to help where resources exist. Find the Lions Club closest to you >>
Watch an archived webinar

View all our archived webinars on YouTube.

Exercise for Older Adults in the Community Setting

This webinar provides an overview of the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA)'s current initiatives and leadership training opportunities. The presenter, Clara Fitzgerald, also discusses exercise interventions related to reducing fall risk in community-dwelling older adults.

The Reality

Physiological Functional Decline
1% loss in S, B, F, CR and metabolism per year after the age of
- 35 ⇒ 10%
- 36-45 ⇒ 10%
- 46-55 ⇒ 10%
- 56-65 ⇒ 10%
- 66-75 ⇒ 10%
- 76-85 ⇒ 10% ... 

Functional decline is manageable. Need to work for the benefits — no pill to provide fitness benefits ...

Exercise for Older Adults in the Community Setting

Join a subcommittee

The following subcommittees are recruiting new members. Time commitment is 3-6 hours per month (one meeting plus independent work). Contact Marguerite Thomas, Coordinator, if you are interested.

Newsletter subcommittee

- Source content
- Write articles
- Edit

Webinar subcommittee

- Select topics
- Recruit presenters
- Promote
- Assist with content development and/or facilitation

Get support for your project

Have an idea for a knowledge mobilization project? Need some help to get it done (expertise, human resources, promotion)? Contact Marguerite Thomas, Coordinator, to discuss how we can work together.

Showcase your work

Share success stories and promising practices. Offer implementation support based on your own lessons learned. Email your stories to Marguerite Thomas.
Forums
Forums are online message boards where members can debate hot topics, share information and find answers to clinical, research and policy questions. Chime in!

Library Services
If you have a falls prevention question, our Information Specialist can help guide you to evidence-based resources and information - for free! Message an Information Specialist.

Upcoming Events
Our events calendar covers a wide range of learning opportunities related to seniors' health care and well being in Ontario, across Canada and abroad. Attend an event!

Become a Member

View archived webinars

Seniors Health Knowledge Network | 90 Eglinton Ave. E, Suite 601 | Toronto | Ontario | M4P 1A6 | Canada