

Centre for
**ADDICTIONS
RESEARCH** OF BC

Annual Report 2003 - 2004

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University
of Victoria

University of Victoria

Background

Addictions to alcohol and drugs and the resulting complications (including chronic diseases, fetal alcohol syndrome, as well as enormous family and social cultural costs) have long been recognized as preventable problems. Yet, effective strategies to tackle these problems continue to be illusive. This stems in part from the complex biological, psychological and social causes of addictions, and from the lack of research focused on identifying best practices for their prevention and treatment. Moreover, addictions research has traditionally been conducted within separate disciplines singularly focused on either the biomedical and clinical or socio-cultural and prevention dimensions of addictions, limiting the transfer of knowledge across the disciplines and to the knowledge users.

In particular, substance abuse is a growing threat to the health and long-term development of young people in British Columbia. Smoking, alcohol, and drug use are critical antecedents of adult health and social problems. While many of the negative consequences are not seen until adulthood, they often originate in behaviours and patterns of use that develop during adolescence. The longest continuing school survey in Ontario (beginning in 1977) reports that cocaine and marijuana use continues to rise, particularly in girls (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2003). Binge drinking is high with one out of four students consuming five or more drinks in a single sitting - an increase of 10% in the last 10 years. Data from the Adolescent Health Study II (1999) indicated that 25% of BC youth used marijuana in 1992, while this figure had increased to 40% by 1999. The use of alcohol and other drugs has also been implicated in the dramatic rise in deaths of BC young people in motor vehicle accidents, suicides, and interpersonal violence. A 2002 report of the BC Children's Commission indicated that alcohol was involved in a full 40% of the deaths of BC children and youth. Alcohol and drug related injuries among youth also add to the social burden of health costs and long-term disabilities.

History of the Centre

In December 2000, a Task Group led by the Kaiser Foundation, consisting of health practitioners, community partners and government officials in the addictions field, was appointed by the Provincial Government to study and make recommendations on issues related to alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and gambling. The Task Group's March 2001 report, *Weaving Threads Together*, recommended that a provincial resource be established to foster and coordinate evidence-based research and knowledge transfer.

In response, the Provincial Government provided funding to create the BC Addiction Foundation with a mandate to affect public policy by fostering research that advances the prevention of addiction and improves the care of addicted individuals in British Columbia. Recognizing that existing research efforts were fragmented and that incentives to encourage additional research in the addictions area were required, the Foundation's first initiative was the decision to sponsor an addictions research centre.

Acknowledging the interdisciplinary research strengths at the University of Victoria, the university's strong tradition of community partnerships for research and the expertise housed in the Centre for Youth and Society, the Foundation invited the University of Victoria to develop a proposal for establishment of a Centre. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Foundation and University of Victoria endowed the University with \$10 million for the development of the Centre for Addictions Research of British Columbia (CAR-BC), an initiative that is now fostering expertise in substance use and addictions research across the province.



October 15, 2003
Inauguration
of the
Centre for
Addictions
Research of
BC

From left to right: Bonnie Leadbeater, CAR-BC Director, Gulzar Cheema, Minister of State for Mental Health & Addictions, Leah Hollins, Chair, BC Addiction Foundation, Rick Roger, CEO, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Martin Taylor, Vice President, Research-UVic.

Our Principles

The constitutive principles of the Centre include commitments to utilizing the interest from the endowment, along with significant contributions from UVic and other sources, to promote excellence in research and knowledge transfer, responding to the need for:

- interdisciplinary approaches to the prevention and treatment of addictions with a population health focus as the main perspective;
- research on cultural and social determinants that influence the etiology, prevention, and treatment of addictions (e.g. specific to rural or urban environments, and school or work as health promotion sites);
- prevention and health service delivery strategies relevant for populations marginalized, and frequently stigmatized by poverty, ethnicity, gender orientation, or occupation, particularly youth and aboriginal persons;
- evaluation of and support for best practices for the prevention and treatment of addictions;
- collaborations with knowledge users including service providers, policy makers, and the public in the identification of research priorities and in the dissemination of research-based knowledge;
- life-span perspectives that see the prevention of youth addictions as the cornerstone for healthy decisions across the lifespan.

Strategic Priorities

The Centre's key focus is on interdisciplinary, population health research. Strategic research priorities for year one including youth and substance abuse prevention, mental health and addictions and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Community-based research plays a large role in our approach and we encourage community partners to help us define research questions. The Centre also supports the creation of innovative knowledge transfer strategies that can help practitioners, policy-makers and the general public to reduce the harm resulting from substance use.



The Centre is committed to training the next generation of substance use and addictions researchers. Pictured: students at UVic.

The Vision

Throughout BC expertise exists in the biomedical causes of addictions and the social cultural dimensions of addictions particularly related to youth and aboriginal health, and health service delivery. The Centre's purpose is to mobilize these strengths to build nationally and internationally recognized networks of researchers and practitioners that will foster research from a population health perspective to advance our knowledge of addictions and of the effective prevention and treatment of addictions. The Centre builds on the research strengths of the University of Victoria and the partner universities in B.C. With its partners the Centre promotes excellence in research and knowledge transfer.

Our Partners

During 2003-2004, the Centre completed the development of partnership agreements with BC's other three major universities including UBC, SFU, and UNBC to establish CAR-BC research units at each site. These agreements support the partners to share resources and Centre planning, and to work together to seek funding for joint initiatives in the field of substance use research.

At **Simon Fraser University**, the Centre collaborates with the Mental Health, Law and Policy Institute. Our site director is Dr. Ray Corrado, Professor in the School of Criminology. Activities at SFU focus on networking with scholars working in the field, as well as furthering research on alcohol/drug abuse and the problem behaviours of incarcerated young offenders; research on alcohol/drug abuse and accessing certain services, resources, and programs in Vancouver's downtown eastside; and, research on alcohol/drug abuse and the ability of a sample of 100 Aboriginal and 100 non-Aboriginal persons to access shelters in Vancouver's downtown eastside and to access a wide range of other services, resources, and programs in BC.

At the **University of British Columbia**, the Centre collaborates with the CIHR funded Training Centre, NEXUS, through Dr. Joy Johnson, Professor in the School of Nursing. While UBC has numerous researchers working in the field of addictions research, CAR-BC activities at UBC focus on tobacco usage, women and addictions, epidemiology of addictions, provision of programming and interventions related to the treatment of addictions, and the social contexts of addictions. As one of its first

initiatives, Dr. Johnson is sponsoring a group of researchers working in the field of methamphetamine use who will seek funding for multidisciplinary research on this emerging issue.

At the **University of Northern British Columbia**, the Centre collaborates with the British Columbia Rural and Remote Health Research Institute (BCRRHRI). Our site co-Directors, Dr. Karen Kelly and Dr. Don Voaklander, pursue initiatives that foster graduate student training as well as seeding proposal development in the following areas: relationships between problem gambling and substance misuse among individuals seeking treatment in a northern setting; evaluation of "Courage to Care," a workplace substance abuse intervention program that addresses the issues of cover-up, denial and enabling that typically hinder addiction and mental health treatment for workers; and, research on addiction treatment services in Northern British Columbia.



Our Partners from left to right:
Dr. Raymond Corrado, SFU
Drs. Karen Kelly and Don Voaklander, UNBC
Dr. Joy Johnson, UBC

The Director

In April 2003, the founding Director of the Centre, Dr. Bonnie Leadbeater, was appointed to lead the establishment of CAR-BC. Dr. Leadbeater is a Professor in the Department of Psychology and co-Director of the UVic Centre for Youth and Society. Dr. Leadbeater's experience in the establishment of the Centre for Youth and Society and her strong research and organizational skills has ensured the successful launch of the Centre. At the end of her term as Director, Dr. Leadbeater will return to her busy schedule of research and publishing.



Bonnie Leadbeater

Our First Year in Review

Through the efforts of our Director, Dr. Bonnie Leadbeater, the Centre established network relationships with all levels of government, as well as the major addictions organizations in Canada including the Kaiser Foundation, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), and the Centre for Mental Health and Addiction (CAMH). Highlights of this year include the following initiatives.

Epidemiology

Sound epidemiological research provides a basis for the assessment of new and existing prevention and treatment initiatives, as well as the assessment of policy and legislative changes. Canada lacks on-going epidemiological survey data on the prevalence of substance use and abuse. As a result, the creation of epidemiological data has been a focus of Centre activities. This year, the Centre assisted the BC Ministry of Health Services to fund an over-sampling of BC residents in the 2004 Canadian Addiction Survey, the first of its kind since 1994. This survey will provide important baseline data against which to measure prevention and treatment efforts. Initial findings of the survey will be released in November 2004. The University of Victoria has also created a new faculty position in the Epidemiology of Substance Use (July 2005 start date). The researcher will use population health, epidemiology and survey research methods to advance knowledge of the epidemiology of and consequences of alcohol, tobacco and drug use and abuse across the lifespan.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) are a major public health concern in Canada. FASD can range in severity and impact, but can have tremendously negative effects in the lives of individuals, families and communities, especially when undiagnosed. For these reasons, the Centre has identified FASD as a key strategic area, and has supported applications for funding for research projects focused on this important issue. Under the leadership of Dr. Kimberley Kerns (Psychology, UVic) a group of health practitioners, Aboriginal community members, parents and researchers has created a network for FASD research on Vancouver Island. Letters of Intent

were submitted to the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, and to the Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children. The latter of these projects, "Enhancing FASD Awareness, Prevention, and Goodness of Fit for Services for Families and Individuals," was approved to proceed to the next step. This project, if successful, will help strengthen diagnostic and family and social services for individuals with FASD.

Youth Prevention

The Centre is seeking funding for a Research Chair in the Prevention of Youth Substance Abuse. This important position will direct an innovative research program that will advance knowledge of the determinants of alcohol, tobacco and other forms of psychoactive substance abuse in youth, and will evaluate effective prevention, harm minimization and treatment programs. This program of research will emphasize interdisciplinary approaches that engage with policy makers, practitioners, and youth and their families to ensure the relevance and timely dissemination of research findings.

Aboriginal Research Priorities Consultation

In conjunction with UBC, UNBC and SFU, the Centre hosted a roundtable discussion at the Aboriginal Health Conference on Vancouver on March 22, 2004. The goals of the roundtable discussions were to identify research issues and priorities, identify researchers working in the area, and develop opportunities for further networking. The discussion was lively, forthright, positive and provided concrete suggestions for research priorities and principles.

Lectures and Events

One of the most immediate ways the Centre can bring together people interested in this field and initiate the transfer of knowledge is to offer a public lecture series. This year we were pleased to offer an exciting series of lectures spanning a range of topics including the role of meditation in addictions treatment, FASD, opiate users

outside of treatment, personality and substance use motivation, monitoring alcohol related harms, and cognitive predictors of substance abuse. In addition, the Centre sponsored a public forum on responsible drug strategies in the Victoria area, a well-attended and dynamic event in March 2004.



Panel Members at the March forum: Diane Rothern, VIHA (Standing), Doug McGhee, MD, Donald MacPherson (City of Vancouver), Paul Battershill (Victoria Chief of Police), Carol Romanov (SOLID), Robert MacGillvray (SOLID), Susan Boyd (UVic)

The highlight of the past year’s series was a lecture series by John Schulenberg, PhD, Senior Research Scientist,



John Schulenberg

Institute for Social Research and Professor of Developmental Psychology, University of Michigan. Dr. John Schulenberg is a leader in the field of youth addictions research. His talks focused on psychological and social development during adolescence and young adulthood with specific emphasis on the link

between developmental transitions and health and well-being, and alcohol and other drug use. His lecture series provided tips for resilience-based parenting and offered intriguing insights into youth drug use correlates from the longitudinal data collected from 1976 to the present in the *Monitoring the Future* project at the University of Michigan (www.monitoringthefuture.org).

Networking Activities

During the Centre’s first year of operations considerable efforts have gone into making BC aware of our activities. The Centre has been represented in major federal and provincial initiatives including: the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse annual meeting; Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Mental Health & Addictions Network Planning Task Force; an FASD partnership with the Minister of State for Early Childhood Development; the Human Early Learning Project at UBC; the “Visioning a Future for Prevention in Vancouver,” and a public symposium on substance abuse prevention

hosted by the City of Vancouver. The Centre has met with representatives from the BC Ministry of Health Services, the Vancouver Island Health Authority and Health Canada. These networking activities resulted in several collaborative initiatives including an environmental scan of issues related to psychoactive substance use in BC funded by Health Canada and the Ministry of Health Services and conducted by the Kaiser Foundation. Findings from this scan will be used to inform planning by the Province and the federal government.

Administrative Highlights

The Centre’s offices at UVic opened officially on September 15, 2003. The Centre has published a website (www.carbc.uvic.ca) and a newsletter and has established a database of researcher contacts in BC. The Centre has also partnered with the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) to facilitate updating the CCSA’s searchable database of addictions researchers from BC. The Centre continues to work on identifying addictions and substance use researchers in the Province from universities, health authorities, provincial authorities as well as government.

Financial Report 2003-2004

Revenues²	
BCAF Endowment	\$190,822.00
Total Salaries	\$52,011.00
Operating Expenses	\$32,730.00
Strategic Initiatives	
Canadian Addiction Survey	\$20,000.00
Partnership Seed Funds	
SFU	\$12,500.00
UBC	\$12,500.00
UNBC	\$12,500.00
Events	\$2,500.00
Total Strategic Initiatives	\$57,500.00
Total Expenses	\$142,241.00
Difference³	\$48,581.00

Notes to the Financial Report:

1. Un-audited Statements as of March 31, 2004.
2. Revenue based on 3.5% of endowment prorated for 55%. Funds transferred to UVic in September 2003 from the BC Addiction Foundation.
3. Difference will be carried over to the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

Looking Forward

As the Centre for Addictions Research of BC enters its second year of operations we look forward to continued activities in all areas of our mandate. The following section describes just a few of the emerging initiatives that will highlight the 2004-2005 year.

New Director

The University of Victoria has hired Dr. Tim Stockwell as the new permanent Director of CAR-BC. Dr. Stockwell began his new position on August 1, 2004. Over the past 15 years he has worked at the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) in Perth, Australia, most recently as the Institute's Director.



Tim Stockwell

Dr. Stockwell has an international reputation as a researcher in the field of alcohol and drug abuse as well as policy analysis, particularly related to alcohol control systems. Under his direction, NDRI has pursued a range of research projects including a successful controlled trial of an alcohol harm reduction and use reduction program for high school youth; an analysis of the legal outcomes of cannabis laws; development of international guidelines for WHO member countries on monitoring alcohol consumption and related harms; a program of research on indigenous alcohol drug use issues; and, a comprehensive international review of "what works" in prevention in which the evidence base of 159 different strategies was review and rated.

Research Capacity

The field of research into substance use and abuse is broad and cuts across many disciplines. Canadians are also faced with an increasingly rapid emergence of new drugs both licit and illicit, as well as quickly changing approaches to policy and legislation at all levels of government. To ensure we have the research capacity to respond to emerging issues in substance use, the Centre will develop programs that support new scholars entering the field of addictions research with fellowships, training programs and increased faculty mentorship. These efforts will

include recruitment of addictions researchers as current faculty retire, and support for new emerging multi-disciplinary teams of researchers throughout BC and Canada, as well as recruitment of graduate and post-doctoral students. The Centre will also sponsor applications for research to major funding bodies in Canada.

Knowledge Transfer

The Canadian addictions research scene is limited by fragmentation among researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. This is evident in the lack of well-developed research networks across Canada, the lack of a Canadian peer-reviewed journal devoted to addictions and substance abuse research, and lack of regular meetings of researchers. Isolation among communities hinders the transfer of knowledge to those who most need it. To remedy this situation, the Centre will sponsor a meeting of BC researchers in 2005, as well as support emerging networks of scholars working on themes related to our mandate.

At the end March 2004, the Centre was in negotiations to establish a Knowledge Transfer unit with the goal of collaborating with the Kaiser Foundation and the BC Ministry of Health Service (MOHS). An MOHS contract valued at \$200,000 annually will be matched by other funding sources generated annually. The CAR-BC Knowledge Transfer Unit will support the BC Ministry of Health Services' approach to the prevention of problematic substance use within a broad public health perspective by strengthening knowledge and skills at both the individual and community level.

Activities of the unit will include: providing information and resources for individuals, community groups, policy-makers, researchers, and others; educating service providers about evidence-based strategies to prevent and reduce substance-related harms; fostering coalitions and networks aimed at increasing community capacity for addressing substance use issues; providing an evidence base to inform policy decisions and organizational practices; and, evaluating knowledge transfer strategies related to prevention and harm reduction.

The Advisory Board

During the Centre's first year of operations, an Advisory Board was established to ensure that Centre stakeholders would have an opportunity to provide input into planning. Membership on the Board represents the other three major universities in BC, a health authority, community based stakeholders and policy makers, as well as a representative from the BC Addiction Foundation.

Dr. Irving Rootman was appointed Chair of the Board by the University of Victoria. Dr. Rootman was the Director of the Centre for Health Promotion at the University of Toronto from 1990 to 2001 and received a Distinguished Scholar Award from the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research in 2002. He also served as the Chair of the Professional Advisory Board of the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario. His long standing interest in addiction research and his national and international reputation for his work on addictions in Canada and with the World Health Organization is a major contribution to the Centre.



Dr. Irving Rootman

Advisory Board Members 2003-2004

Ms Lauren Casey
Executive Directors, PEERS

Dr. Bruce Clayman
Vice President Research, Simon Fraser University

Dr. John Cutcliffe
Chair, Nursing, University of Northern BC

Dr. Elliot Goldner
Director, Mental Health Evaluation and Community
Consultation Unit, Dept. of Psychiatry
University of British Columbia

Mr. Pat Griffin
Executive Director, Victoria Youth Empowerment Society

Ms Jocelyn Harder
Victoria Hope Society

Ms Leah Hollins
Chair, BC Addiction Foundation

Mr. Edgar F. Kaiser Jr.
Chair & CEO, Kaiser Foundation

Dr. Perry Kendall
Provincial Health Officer, BC Ministry of Health Services

Dr. G. Alan Marlatt
Director, Addictive Behaviours Research Centre
University of Washington

Dr. Anthony Phillips
Graduate Program in Neuroscience, University of British
Columbia

Mr. Rick Roger
Chief Executive Officer, Vancouver Island Health Authority

Dr. Irving Rootman
Senior Investigator, Michael Smith Foundation
University of Victoria

Dr. Martin Taylor
Vice President Research, University of Victoria

Dr. Richard Vedan
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