



Better medicine. Better outcomes.



NACTRC's Quarterly Research Report kicks off this month with exciting features on what we've been up to lately.

NACTRC Quarterly Updates

Welcome to the first edition of the new NACTRC Quarterly Research Report. This newsletter will provide valuable information to better enable and facilitate research, highlighting the great work and collaboration with our many strategic partners. We will also highlight some of the outstanding research conducted by the many exceptional and dedicated investigators.

The last year has been exceptionally busy with interventional studies increasing by 35 percent and proceeds from all research more than doubling. Working closely with our numerous stakeholders at the University of Alberta and Alberta Health Services, we were able to better coordinate the efficient delivery of administrative and research support services, including for contracts, finances, education and technology.

We look forward to offering investigators, their teams and our research sponsors more and improved opportunities as we continue to evolve and meet the challenges presented in this dynamic environment. The ongoing work and integration with information management and technologies, laboratory services, legal services and financial services continues to come to fruition.



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

Clinical Research Corner

Welcome to the *Clinical Research Corner*, which is designed to provide brief updates regarding clinical research from the Office of Research, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (FoMD). Questions, comments or feedback? Please email [Dr. Jillian Byrne](#) (Director of Clinical Research, FoMD).

Progress to Date

Clinical Research Seminar Series

The CRSS is a new monthly seminar series co-hosted by the FoMD and NACTRC to communicate relevant and timely issues related to clinical research. Past talks have featured the Strategic Clinical Networks (SCNs), Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR), and Alberta's Tomorrow Project. Information on upcoming seminars is available [here](#).

The CISU

Although in its infancy, the Clinical Inquiry Support Unit (CISU) is up-and-running! To learn more about the CISU and how your research team can utilize eCLINICIAN to support the prospective enrollment of patients for research, click [here](#).

Information for Clinical Researchers

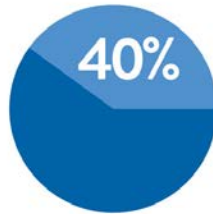
Information specific to clinical researchers has been developed on the [FoMD site](#). We encourage you to visit on a regular basis to stay up-to-date on funding opportunities, seminars, resources, and more.

Coming Soon: A 'One-Stop' Checklist!

Navigating the clinical research environment at the University of Alberta can be complex. The FoMD and NACTRC are collaborating to develop a brief, tailored checklist to help researchers to develop and conduct their clinical research study. Users will be presented with two screening questions regarding their study and will have the option to download a personalized checklist.

Did You Know?

Our clinical research community includes both clinician and non-clinician faculty members conducting Pillars 2 – 4 research, the majority of whom are in the Departments of Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and Surgery in the FoMD.



Approximately **40%** of FoMD faculty are conducting Pillars 2–4 research.

Annually, our community achieves approximately

\$45 million

in industry and national- and provincial-level funding.



Nearly half have **< 40% time commitment** to research, highlighting the need to streamline administrative processes and optimize efficiency.

Clinical Research In Progress

Spotlight: Dr. Ali Shahriari



“We really found this unique capability of being able to connect industry to investigator through NACTRC and be able to get things done very effectively”

Dr. Ali Shahriari has been a thoracic and cardiac surgeon for years and is now teaming up with NACTRC on a clinical trial that aims to improve treatment for aortic dissection repair. Alongside U of A doctors like Dr. Michael Moon, Dr. Shahriari will be taking the first steps in almost 50 years to creating a more effective treatment for this condition.

Spotlight: Dr. Scott Garrison, MD, PhD

Dr. Scott Garrison (Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine) is a family physician with a strong interest in conducting pragmatic trials to answer meaningful research questions driven by day-to-day clinical practice.



In 2012, Dr. Garrison developed the Pragmatic Clinical Trials Collaborative^[1], which is a network of more than 400 primary care providers from Alberta and British Columbia who share an interest in improving the care of patients by conducting pragmatic RCTs. As part of this multi-centre network, which represents the largest network of primary care practices doing research in Canada, Dr. Garrison leads two large pragmatic trials, one of which was recently funded by an Alberta Innovates Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System (PRIHS) grant for \$1.2 million over a three-year period. This funding will support Dr. Garrison's trial, called 'BedMed' which explores if the timing of blood pressure medication to hypertensive patients can impact morbidity and mortality. Given that approximately one-in-five adults are hypertensive in Canada and previous research has demonstrated that up to 60% of patients may experience a reduction in adverse outcomes if medication is taken at night (vs. conventional morning administration), this research is of potentially high translational impact.

In another pragmatic trial, Dr. Garrison and his network are examining the timing of warfarin administration for patients predisposed to forming clots; although such patients are traditionally told to take warfarin at dinnertime, this is the same time of day that dietary vitamins (i.e., vitamin K) may inadvertently interact with the effect of this medication. In 2015/16, Dr. Garrison and his team successfully recruited 236 family physicians spanning 53 different communities across Western Canada. Coupled with the fact that timing of warfarin administration has not been previously investigated and there is little-to-no cost or inconvenience associated with changing medication timing, this research is of potentially profound impact if patients could implement a simple amendment to medicine administration that may yield less risk for adverse outcomes and greater medication effectiveness.

Recently, Dr. Garrison was awarded a CIHR SPOR Innovative Clinical Trial Multi-Year Grant for \$1.4 million. In March, he was celebrated as the recipient of the Edmonton Zone Medical Staff Association (EZMSA) Researcher of the Year Award for being a physician whose research has significantly impacted clinical practice in their area.

^[1]www.pragmatictrials.ca

Strategic Clinical Networks

Submitted by: Jackie Sargent, CMP I Senior Communications Advisor, AHS

One of Alberta's best kept secrets is becoming less of one each day. In fact, if you ask the executives at Alberta Health Services, they would tell you they don't want it to be a secret at all. So what is this best kept secret?

AHS' Strategic Clinical Networks™.

"Strategic Clinical Networks (SCNs) were introduced in 2012 to be engines of innovation, knowledge translation and vehicles for achieving better health outcomes for all Albertans," says Tracy Wasylak, Senior Program Officer for the Strategic Clinical Networks. "Since then, we have grown to 14 SCNs, all focusing on various aspects of health. The SCNs have already made significant progress in providing evidence-based strategies to improve health care delivery, from prevent and promotion, through the entire care continuum."

Some of the successes include the [Enhanced Recovery After Surgery \(ERAS\) project](#), [the reduction of anti-psychotic medications for seniors in long-term care](#), and, most recently, the [QulCR program](#), which helped [reduce Alberta's stroke treatment time in half](#). While the SCNs lead these – and many other – initiatives, the true success is the partnerships that have developed.

"One of the AHS priorities is a province-wide, integrated health system, and the SCNs are truly enablers of that vision," says Wasylak. "The SCNs work with operations to grow teams of front-line health providers, physicians, managers, patients, scholars, researchers, and community partners, all working together to find – and then share – best care options for patients based on clinical evidence. The more we can work together to drive change from the front-line up and across the province, the better our opportunity to make real and lasting improvements to the health care system."

Information on the Strategic Clinical Networks can be found at www.ahs.ca/scn. Those interested in SCN research projects or who have projects that may align with SCN priorities are encouraged to visit each SCN's page, or contact scn@ahs.com.

They've already mapped out the best options based on clinical evidence.



Strategic Clinical Networks are AHS' engines for innovation. Learn how they are transforming health care in Alberta.

In the News

University of Alberta professor of medicine Stephen Shafran discusses a game-changing drug that could potentially eliminate hepatitis C.

<http://edmontonjournal.com/.../wiping-out-hepatitis-c-alberta...>

New initiative to benefit patients with complex needs

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/news/Page13839.aspx>

Canadian children suffer highest rate of painful bowel diseases in the world: <https://www.ualberta.ca/news-and-events/newsarticles/2017/april/canadian-children-suffer-highest-rate-of-painful-bowel-diseases-in-the-world?cmp=1>

TRANSPLANT FRONTIERS II How stem cells could transform anti-rejection therapy
I University of Alberta: <https://www.ualberta.ca/news-and-events/newsarticles/2017/may/transplant-frontiers-ii-how-stem-cells-could-transform-anti-rejection-therapy?cmp=1>

