

Alzheimer Society of Canada awards \$2.1 million to Canadian dementia researchers and launches new competition

“We’re bracing for a sharp increase in the number of Canadians with dementia.”

Toronto, ON – September 26, 2019 – The Alzheimer Society of Canada is pleased to announce that it has invested \$2.1 million in Canadian dementia research through the 2019 Alzheimer Society Research Program competition. Twenty promising research projects were selected through a rigorous peer review process led by Canada’s foremost dementia researchers and including input from Canadians living with dementia.

This year’s funding recipients will investigate some of the most pressing research questions in the areas of early diagnosis and detection, risk reduction and prevention, developing treatments, and improving care and support for people living with dementia. Projects include:

Dr. Arne Stinchcombe, Brock University: Older members of LGBTQ2+ communities have expressed distinct concerns related to developing and living with dementia. Dr. Stinchcombe will examine the risks of cognitive decline among LGBTQ2+ individuals and identify ways to promote inclusive dementia care and caregiver supports.

Dr. Jacqueline Rousseau, Université de Montréal: Many older adults want to continue living at home but preserving their quality of life as they age can be challenging. Dr. Rousseau will use a home assessment tool to better understand the relationship between older adults, their caregivers and their home environments and identify ways to adapt the home environment to make it more age friendly.

Dr. Étienne Myette-Côté, Université de Sherbrooke: In people at increased risk of Alzheimer’s disease, brain energy levels are reduced by about 10%. Dr. Myette-Côté will evaluate the effect of a ketone drink on brain energy, brain function and quality of life in individuals with mild cognitive impairment. If the ketone drink successfully improves brain energy and brain function, it could lead to larger-scale studies to evaluate whether the drink can delay the onset or progression of Alzheimer’s disease.

Funding new and bold research

The Society is now accepting applications for the 2020 research competition, with some exciting changes. Beginning this fall, the Program will offer two new funding opportunities to foster greater innovation and outside-the-box thinking:

- **Proof of concept grant:** Established and new investigators who are leading high-risk, novel projects can apply for \$100,000 for up to five years.
- **New investigator operating grant:** Investigators who are within the first four years of their faculty position are eligible for \$200,000 for up to four years to carry their work throughout the full research cycle.

“We’re bracing for a sharp increase in the number of Canadians with dementia, so research demands a bolder approach,” says Dr. Saskia Sivananthan, Chief Science & KTE Officer,

Alzheimer Society of Canada. “The fight against dementia depends largely on the scientists of the future. With our new funding opportunities, we can better support researchers who are just entering the field of dementia and who are pursuing more novel ideas.”

In addition to the new funding opportunities, beginning this year the Program will shift to an open competition that will focus on four new funding priorities:

- discovery;
- policy and health systems change;
- evaluation of community programs; and
- ethical and legal issues.

This shift in priorities will help to create immediate impact and improve life and care for the more than half a million Canadians living with dementia today. In particular, the Program will prioritize applications that will directly influence improvements within the health-care system, delivery of services and care practices as well as support solutions to address ethical or legal issues such as resident-to-resident aggression in long-term care homes.

Says Dr. Sivananthan, “Alzheimer’s is one of the most challenging diseases of our time, so it’s critical we prioritize our research to make a positive real-world impact on individuals who are living with dementia today and ensure that care and support is tailored to their needs.”

To learn more about this year’s funding recipients and the 2020 competition, please visit <https://alzheimer.ca/en/Home/Research/Alzheimer-Society-Research-Program>

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