



RESEARCH SCHOLAR PROGRAM – 2018

SUPERVISOR & PROJECT INFORMATION FORM

Please complete and return, via email only (crems.programs@utoronto.ca) by **November 3rd 2017** (forms received after this date will not be posted).

Supervisor Information

Name: Dr. Nadiya Sunderji

Email: sunderjin@smh.ca

Degree: MD MPH FRCPC

SGS Appointment (IMS, IHPME, LMP etc.): co-supervisor is appointed

Academic Rank: Assistant Professor

Field of Research: Mental health services, quality improvement

Research Institution Affiliation (if applicable): Associate Scientist, Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute

Name: Dr. Abbas Ghavam-Rassoul

Email: ghavamrassoula@smh.ca

Degree: MD MHSc CCFP FCFP

SGS Appointment: Public Health Sciences (DLSPH)

Academic Rank: Assistant Professor

Field of Research: Quality improvement, health professions education

Research Institution Affiliation (if applicable): n/a

Allocation of student contact time (number of hours per week YOU are available to the student for any concerns or to review progress):

Dr. Sunderji will provide individual supervision one hour per week and additionally as needed; Dr. Ghavam-Rassoul will meet with the student one hour per week as part of our regular research team meeting and additionally as needed.

Project Information

Title: Measuring and improving collaborative mental health care across Canada

Description (max 500 words):

Collaborative mental health care involves mental health specialists working closely together with primary care providers to improve access to high quality mental health care. With over 80 RCTs it is a very well-evidenced approach, yet the most empirically supported models have rarely been implemented across Canada and instead other less studied approaches have been implemented. Over the past few years our team has developed a [quality framework](#) to delineate key/'active' ingredients of collaborative mental health care that should be implemented across all primary care settings, as well as the essential structures and care processes needed for successful implementation in 'real world' settings (i.e. addressing issues of fidelity versus adaptation). Our framework will promote better implementation of well-studied models ('evidence based practice') and better evaluation of the variations that have been implemented ('practice based evidence'). Although this framework has attracted much interest across Canada, it was developed with Toronto-based expert and stakeholder input and we need to better understand the health policy and health service delivery context in other regions to revise the framework for national relevance and transferability. In this study, we will explore this topic in collaboration with the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Canadian Psychiatric Association and adapt the existing framework as needed to scale up its use nationally. **Ultimately, we will develop 2-4 quality indicators that will be used to support quality improvement of mental health care in primary care practices across Canada.**

The CREMS scholar student who is selected to work with our team would join an established and active team of mental health and primary care researchers that includes a core team: co-Principal Investigators Dr. Sunderji and Dr. Ghavam-Rassoul, another family physician, and two PhD researchers, and; a broader team of national and international collaborators. The student will substantially contribute to a qualitative study exploring how collaborative mental health care is practiced across Canada and how it can be evaluated and improved, recognizing that this is shaped by health policy and healthcare financing in different provinces. The CREMS student would have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills related to research in the areas of primary care, mental health service delivery, health policy, interprofessional care, qualitative research, and/or quality measurement or quality improvement. The student will also begin to develop a national network of contacts.

If human subjects are involved, have Ethics been obtained?

YES

NO

Application Submitted

N/A

Do you expect this work will be published within the 20 months?

YES

NO

Uncertain

Student's roles and responsibilities (please be specific)

The student will play a key role and will be well supported to take ownership of this project from start to finish. The student will: be trained in qualitative research methods; recruit for and conduct key informant interviews and focus groups by telephone and webinar; conduct a content and thematic analysis of the transcripts; participate in a half day face to face expert/stakeholder dialogue meeting, and; lead author a manuscript for a peer-reviewed journal.

The core research team meets for an hour per week, where the student will be an active contributor. Dr. Sunderji will meet with the student for an hour of supervision per week throughout the 20-month scholars program. Thus, the student will have ample opportunities for supervision, mentorship, and engagement with other researchers. The PhDs will train the student in qualitative research methods, including providing opportunities for the student to observe data collection and be observed, and they will be available throughout the study so that the student can progress with graded responsibility according to their individual abilities and learning needs. The team will hold longer meetings during the more intensive data analysis period in the Summers.

The Student will have access to office space, computing and printing facilities, phone and email support as needed via St. Michael's Hospital. Our collaborators are providing technical support for the webinars and a paid professional transcriptionist will transcribe data (i.e. the student is not expected to do this). We will provide financial support for the student to attend the national collaborative mental health care conference in Toronto June 2018, and to present a poster; future conference presentations can also be supported and will be determined in discussion with the student and as the project progresses. The student will be invited to optionally attend bi-weekly research rounds at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, weekly grand rounds in the St. Michael's Mental Health and Addictions Service, and other educational events according to their interest and availability.

By the end of the CREMS scholars program the student will:

- Have working knowledge of qualitative sampling frameworks (through readings, discussion with supervisor, and contributing to sampling and recruitment decisions)
- Have working knowledge of interviewing techniques (by contributing to semi-structured interviewing guides, and by observing experienced Research Coordinators conduct interviews and then conducting interviews with observation and feedback)
- Be proficient with qualitative content analysis and have working knowledge of thematic analysis (by conducting analysis of approximately 20 interview transcripts independently and as a member of a research team)
- Gain experience with presenting research findings orally and in written reports at peer-reviewed conferences and journals, including leading authorship of at least one conference presentation and one manuscript
- Gain exposure to the literature on collaborative mental health care, qualitative research, and quality measurement and improvement (with the breadth and depth of exposure in each topic to be determined collaboratively with the supervisor and with opportunities to discuss suggested readings)
- Be aware of considerations in the design and conduct of health services research (including ethical considerations, and methods for promoting knowledge translation / uptake of the findings)

Please indicate who will serve as the student's direct report (PI, PhD student, technician etc...)

The student will primarily report to the PI. Dr. Sunderji has mentored 6 students across the spectrum from

pre-medical students to senior psychiatry residents. I am deeply committed to ensuring students have meaningful learning opportunities as research team members, have mentorship in their career development, and are recognized for their contributions. With my support, all of my students have developed their research skills and professional identities, led academic research presentations, and been lead authors or co-authors or on manuscripts undergoing peer review or in press. Our CREMS summer student for 2017 has already led authorship of a poster at a peer-reviewed conference, and will co-author another poster and a manuscript.