Comprehensive Research Experience for Medical Students (CREMS)

2022 Supervisor and Project Information Form

Please complete and return via email ONLY to crems.programs@utoronto.ca by February 18, 2022.

Supervisor Information

NOTE: CREMS will not support pre-determined pairings of students and supervisors. Supervisors must agree to open their projects to all students and interview all that are interested.

Name: Rinat Nissim
Email: Rinat.nissim@uhn.ca

Department: Dalla Lana School of Public Health; IMS
Hospital/Research Institution: Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Research Institute

SGS Department(s) (if applicable):
Dalla Lana School of Public Health; IMS

ORCID ID (see https://orcid.org/ - If you do not have an ORCID ID we encourage you to sign up for one):
Click or tap here to enter text.

Location of Work:
Princess Margaret Cancer Centre/Lucliff

Field of Research (up to 4 keywords):
Psychosocial Oncology; Palliative Care; Family Caregivers; End of Life and Bereavement

Student contact time (number of hours per week YOU are available to the student for any concerns or to review progress):
2-10 hours per week, as needed
NOTE: If this project is selected, this information will be posted on CREMS website for interested student applicants to view research opportunities.

PROJECT TITLE:
Quality of Death in Hospital and Bereavement Outcomes in the COVID-19 Era

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
Including background, aim(s), methodS and significance of the project. Maximum 300 words.
Background: The COVID-19 pandemic and its containment measures have altered how people die and how their families grieve. Evaluating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on QOD and bereavement morbidity is an essential step towards understanding the needs of bereaved families and developing mental health supports and services that are responsive, accessible, and timely. In our current 2-year CIHR-funded study, we aim to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the end-of-life and bereavement experiences and to develop evidence to inform relevant policies and support services.

Research Aims: This study is designed to characterize: i) the QOD and bereavement outcomes and their predictors from the perspective of bereaved family members of individuals dying, of any cause, in two hospitals in Toronto, Ontario, during the COVID-19 pandemic; and ii) the experience and perceived met and unmet support needs of bereaved family members.

Methods: This study is a 2-year, cross-sectional, multi-site, mixed-method study of 540 family members of individuals who died in hospital between January, 2021 and December, 2021. This study takes place at two large hospitals in Toronto, Ontario: University Health Network (UHN) and Sunnybrook Health Science Centre (SHSC). Retrospective lists of patient deaths at UHN and SHSC are used to identify bereaved family members for approach six to 12 months following the patient death. A concurrent nested mixed method design is used to collect quantitative and qualitative data from participants. Descriptive and univariate and multivariate statistics will be used to outline sample characteristics and to assess predictors of QOD and bereavement morbidity. Purposive sampling is used to select a subset of participants for semi-structured qualitative interviews about their experience of QOD and bereavement. Grounded theory methodology will be used to analyze their experience.

Relevance: Our study will provide real-time evidence to inform policy and clinical guidelines to better support family members before and after patients’ deaths, and to develop interventions to prevent and treat complicated grief during the pandemic and beyond.

Is this project remote-capable (in case of new restrictions) or have an alternative remote option?
☒ Yes, remote capable ☐ No
☐ Yes, alternate remote option. Please specify (100 words max): Click or tap here to enter text.

If human subjects are involved, have the appropriate Research Ethics Board approvals been obtained?
☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

If yes, please list the application submission date:
Do you expect this work will be published?
☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain / Other
**Research Environment and Student Roles and Responsibilities**

Please be specific as possible. Please describe the research environment, including availability of required facilities/equipment/expertise, supervisor’s experience and mentorship plans. Please clearly outline the student role(s) and responsibilities related to the project, potential educational value, and indicate who will serve as the student’s direct report for daily oversight (PI, PHD student, technician, etc.). **Maximum 300 words.**

The student will have the opportunity to be involved in relevant literature reviews, the quantitative and/or qualitative data collection, and quantitative and/or qualitative data analyses. If interested, the student can focus on a single topic/question within the large mixed-method study. For example, our study will engage a professional interpreter through the UHN Interpretation and Translation Services Department to assist with conducting interviews with caregivers who do not feel comfortable participating in English, and students who are interested equity, diversity and inclusion research initiatives can focus on this set of interviews.

Students will be part of a multidisciplinary research team and will be supervised by and report to the two study PIs (Drs. Rinat Nissim & Sarah Hales). In addition, students can participate in a range of weekly educational activities at the Department of Supportive Care at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre including: Health Research seminar, Qualitative Research seminar, and Grand Rounds.