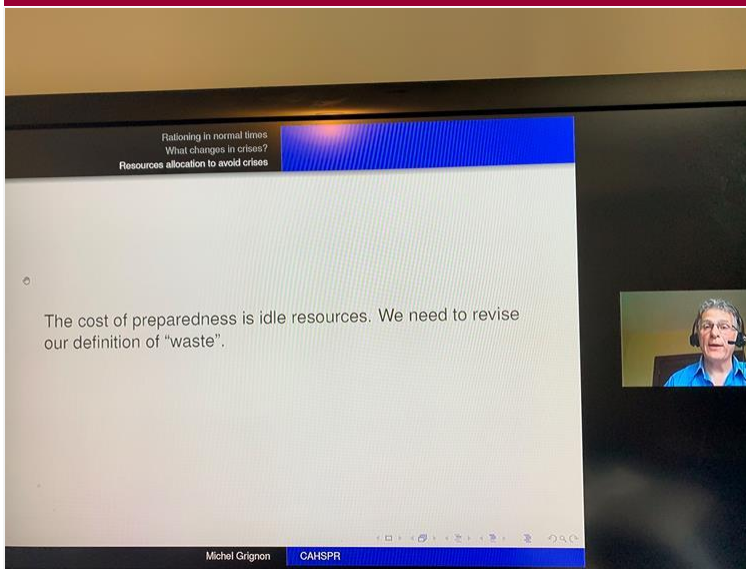


# CHEPA news

Centre for Health Economics and Policy Analysis

Summer 2020



## In this issue

- Many CHEPA members involved in COVID-19 research
- Honours, grants for MPH program
- Many CHEPA members in the news

**Photo: The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the cancellation of most research conferences this spring but some, including CAHSPR, held modified events online instead. This screenshot from May 27 shows Michel Grignon, who was on the opening panel for CAHSPR's virtual conference, presenting "COVID19: What have we learned and how has healthcare & research changed?"**

## E-News

CHEPA researchers have been helping to shape Canada's health system since 1988. Located at McMaster University, CHEPA ([chepa.org](http://chepa.org)) is a multidisciplinary centre providing timely and relevant evidence to inform policy-making at all levels of the health-care system.

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## COVID-19 Research and Activities

Many CHEPA members are involved in research studies, advisory committees and knowledge transfer activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

## New Publications

### Journal Articles

Ahmad A, Chung R, Eckenwiler L, Ganguli AM, Hunt M, Richards R, Saghai Y, Schwartz L, Scully JL, Wild V. [What does It mean to be made vulnerable in the era of COVID-19?](#) *Lancet*. 2020 Apr 27. pii: S0140-6736(20)30979-X. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30979-X.

Apatu A, Sinnott W, Piggott T, Butler-Jones T, Anderson LN, Alvarez L, et al. [Where are we now? A content analysis of Canadian Master of Public Health course descriptions and the Public Health Agency of Canada's core competencies.](#) *Journal of Public*

- **Elizabeth Alvarez** leads a group of investigators that includes **Emma Apatu**, **Ellen Amster**, **Katherine Boothe**, McMaster pathology professor Dr. Mark Loeb, Health Policy PhD student **Ahmed Belal**, and Master of Public Health student **Stephanie Hopkins** in research that is registered with the World Pandemic Research Network. Their study, [“Physical distancing policies and their effect on the epidemiology of COVID-19: A multi-national comparative study,”](#) is addressing social distancing policies (and related policies) and the epidemiology of COVID.
  - As well, Alvarez won an award from the National Science Foundation-funded Social Science Extreme Events Research (SSEER) Network and the CONVERGE facility housed at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder for a study entitled [“Policy Frameworks and Impacts on the Epidemiology of COVID-19”, COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research.](#)
- **Andrew Costa**, the Schlegel Research Chair in Clinical Epidemiology & Aging, is involved in COVID research on multiple fronts. He is:
  - Nominated Principal Investigator of COREG, the McMaster regional (including Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton and Niagara) inpatient and outpatient COVID-19 patients registry, which collects case data on confirmed COVID-19 hospital inpatients, as well as positive outpatients, in collaboration with the WHO International Severe Acute Respiratory and Emerging Infection Consortium (ISARIC). The information gathered through the research, which is supported by a [grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#) informs rapid decision-making and projections, sub-studies, extensions, and linkage.
  - Working with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and Public Health Ontario to analyze nursing home COVID data.
  - Working with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to re-create and analyze a retirement home cohort linked to COVID data. [“COVID-19: Secondary Analyses of Ontario COVID-19 Data to Inform Planning and Response for Priority Populations”](#) informs questions that may help current and future preventative policies and interventions.
  - Part of the large Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA)’s COVID-19 study. It draws from the 50,000 Canadians who are participating in the broader CLSA study to examine the experiences of older adults during the pandemic -- how they cope, the impacts on their physical and mental health, and changes to how they access health-care services.
- **Michel Grignon**, who has previously researched and published extensively about long-term care insurance,

*Health Management and Practice.* 2020. May 4.

Alvarez E, Sutton A, Barton B, Vaidya S. [Evaluating a group-based Yoga of Stress Resilience program: A pragmatic before-after interventional study protocol.](#) *BMJ Open.* 2020. 10:e035862.

Balderrama F, Schwartz LJ, Longo CJ. [When are Pharmaceuticals Priced Fairly? An Alternative Risk-Sharing Model for Pharmaceutical Pricing.](#) *Health Care Analysis.* 2020. 28, 21-136.

Barbera L, Sutradhar R, Seow H, Earle CC, Howell D, Mittmann N, Li Q, Thiruchelvam D. [Impact of standardized Edmonton Symptom Assessment System use on emergency department visits and hospitalization: Results of a population-based retrospective matched cohort analysis.](#) *JCO Oncology Practice.* 2020. May 28:JOP1900660.

Brown KA, Jones A, Daneman N, Chan AK, Schwartz KL, Garber GE, Costa A, Stall NM. [Association between nursing home crowding and COVID-19 infection and mortality in Ontario, Canada.](#) *medRxiv.* 2020.06.23.20137729. (PREPRINT)

Burrows KE, Abelson J, Miller PA, Levine M, Vanstone M. [Understanding health professional role integration in complex adaptive systems: A multiple-case study of physician assistants in Ontario, Canada.](#) *BMC Health Services Research.* 2020. April 29;20(1):365.

Cox JL, Parkash R, Foster GA, Xie F, et al; IMPACT-AF Investigators. [Integrated Management Program Advancing Community Treatment of Atrial Fibrillation \(IMPACT-AF\): A cluster randomized trial of a computerized clinical decision support tool.](#) *American Heart Journal.* 2020. March 13. (224) 35-46.

D'Amico RS, Baum G, Serulle Y, Silva D, Smith ML, Wallack RA, Ellis JA, Levine M, et al. [A roadmap to](#)

has been sharing his knowledge about the topic within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **John Lavis**, Director of the [McMaster Health Forum](#), co-leads [COVID-END](#), a global partnership of more than 40 evidence synthesis, Health Technology Assessment (HTA) and guideline groups. The Forum/Rapid Improvement Support and Exchange (RISE) staff are facilitating this work. The Forum is also preparing [rapid-evidence profiles as part of the MOH's evidence synthesis platform](#) to support provincial decision-making with very short turn-around times. These include documents on [identifying strategies for dealing with pandemic-related mental health and addictions issues](#) and other [resources to support decision-makers](#) as they respond to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Mitch Levine** is involved in research into the impact of COVID-19 on the experience of rheumatology patients. More than 12,000 patients with rheumatic diseases are being surveyed to evaluate how the existence of COVID-19 in the community affects this potentially vulnerable population. The primary goal is to determine whether the presence of specific rheumatic diseases or medications may place these patients at a greater or decreased risk of developing COVID-19. Researchers will evaluate how the pandemic affects their choices to continue medications, how it affects the control of their disease, mental health, and how they communicate with their rheumatologists. PhD student **Kevin Kennedy**, supervised by **Feng Xie**, is also involved in the research.

- **Lisa Schwartz**, McMaster's Arnold L. Johnson Chair in Health Care Ethics, is a member of advisory committees for both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ontario government that are providing guidance to health and political officials on ethical issues related to the pandemic, and to [advisory boards related to COVID clinical studies](#). She is also involved with several research studies:

- She is Co-Principal Investigator with McGill University's Matthew Hunt in the study "*Ethical tensions of implementing research during a crisis: Understanding moral experiences of healthcare providers caring for patients who are enrolled in CoViD-19 clinical trials*," led by Health Research Methodology PhD candidate **Rachel Yantzi** for her doctoral work, supervised by Schwartz.
- Schwartz is also on the advisory committee for a national CIHR-funded study led by McMaster's Dr. Donald Arnold entitled "*A randomized open-label trial of convalescent plasma for hospitalized adults with acute COVID-19 respiratory illness (CONCOR-1)*"
- She has presented and moderated a number of global webinars related to the ethical issues associated with the provision of health care during the pandemic, including a

[reopening a neurosurgical practice in the age of COVID-19](#). *World Neurosurgery*. 2020. July. 139:289-293.

Denburg AE, Abelson J, Chen S, Hurley J, Ungar W. [Does moral reasoning influence public values for health care priority setting?: A population-based randomized stated preference survey](#). *Health Policy*. 2020. May 13.

Dixon PR, Feeny D, Tomlinson G, Cushing S, Chen JM, Krahn MD. [Health-related quality of life changes associated with hearing loss](#). *JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surgery*. 2020. May 14.

Grignon M, Pollex S. [The case for public long-term care insurance](#). *Policy Options*. 2020. May 25.

Helpman L, Pond GR, Elit L, Anderson LN, Seow H. [Endometrial cancer presentation is associated with social determinants of health in a public healthcare system: A population-based cohort study](#). *Gynecologic Oncology*. 2020. Apr 27. pii: S0090-8258(20)30993-8.

Javed AA, Aljied R, Allison DJ, Anderson LN, Ma J, Raina P. [Body mass index and all-cause mortality in older adults: A scoping review of observational studies](#). *Obesity Reviews*. 2020.

Jarvis T, Scott F, El-Jardali F, Alvarez E. [Defining and classifying public health systems: a critical interpretive synthesis](#). *Health Research Policy & Systems*. 2020. 18, 68.

Jones A, Bronskill SE, Seow H, Juneke M, Feeny D, Costa AP. [Associations between continuity of primary and specialty physician care and use of hospital-based care among community-dwelling older adults with complex care needs](#). *PLOS ONE*. 2020.15: e0234205.

Jones A, Bronskill S, Seow H, Feeny D, Lapointe-Shaw L, Mowbray F, Costa A. [Physician home visit patterns and hospital use among older adults with](#)

webinar entitled "[Beyond 'good enough': How to engage communities with COVID-19 research quickly and effectively](#)" that drew from her advisory work for a WHO task force on [Good Participatory Practices in Emerging Pathogens](#).

- [Hsien Seow](#), who holds the Canada Research Chair in Palliative Care and Health System Innovation, is Principal Investigator in a study looking at "[The #Caremongering social media campaign: Understanding its impact and adaptability to combat social isolation among older adults affected by COVID-19](#)". [Julia Abelson](#) is a co-investigator on the study, which is funded by the [McMaster Institute for Research on Aging \(MIRA\)](#).
- [Arthur Sweetman](#), Ontario Research Chair in Health Human Resources, is a member of an [external advisory group appointed by the provincial government](#) in February to provide strategic advice on staffing in the long-term care sector across the province.
- Postdoctoral fellow [Irene Mussio](#) is involved in a study with colleagues at the University of Wisconsin entitled "[Changes in higher order risk attitudes during a pandemic: the impact of rapid increases in health background risk on financial decisions](#)".

## Grants, accolades for MPH program

[Emma Apatu](#), Director of McMaster's [Master of Public Health Program](#) (MPH) and co-investigators have been awarded a Leadership in Teaching and Learning Fellowship from McMaster's MacPherson Institute for "[Transforming the Master of Public Health Program to Meet Workforce Needs](#)".

As well, Apatu and co-investigators including [Elizabeth Alvarez](#) and [Laura Anderson](#), also received a PALAT grant for [Integration of InPlace Software in the MPH Program](#).

## Honours

[Arthur Sweetman](#), the Ontario Research Chair in Health Human Resources, was awarded McMaster's Faculty of Social Sciences' Impact Award for 2020. It is given to an individual or team whose research has had important:

- intellectual or academic impacts and/or
- community, cultural, social and/or economic impacts.

## Media

[Ellen Amster](#), the McMaster Hannah Chair in the History of Medicine, wrote an article for [The Conversation](#) about [what the past can tell us about COVID-19 and our](#)

[functional impairments](#). *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*. 2020. June 24.

McDonald S, Yu M, Van Blyderveen S, Schmid L., Sword W, Vanstone M, Biringer A, Beyene J. [Prediction of excess pregnancy weight gain using psychological, physical, and social predictors: A validated model in a prospective cohort study](#). *PLOS One*. 2020. 15(6):e0233774.

Mercuri M, Upshur RE, Gafni A. [Guidelines should not recommend the type of decision-making for the medical encounter](#). *Patient Education & Counseling*. 2020. May 15. pii: S0738-3991(20)30282-2.

Mowbray F, Zargoush M, Jones A, de Wit K, Costa A. [Predicting hospital admission for older emergency department patients: Insights from machine learning](#). *International Journal of Medical Informatics*. 2020. August;140:104163.

Mulvale G, Green J, Miatello A, Cassidy A, Martens T. [Finding harmony within dissonance: Engaging patients, family/caregivers and service providers in research to fundamentally restructure relationships through integrative dynamics](#). *Health Expectations*. 2020. March 19.

Neville T, Takaoka A, Clarke F, Sadik M, Vanstone M, et al. [Keepsakes at the end of life](#). *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*. 2020. June 21.

Parackal A, Tarride JE, Xie F, Blackhouse G, Hoogenes J, Matsumoto ED, Hylton D, Hanna W, Adili A, Shayegan B. [Economic evaluation of robot-assisted radical prostatectomy compared to open radical prostatectomy for prostate cancer treatment in Ontario, Canada](#). *Canadian Urological Association Journal*. 2020 Apr 28. doi: 10.5489/cuaj.6376.

Patel T, Christy K, Grierson L, Shadd J, Farag A, O'Toole D, Lawson J, Vanstone M. [Clinician](#)

[future](#). As well, *Informed Consent* published her commentary entitled "[We are George Floyd: How his Killing and COVID 19 made for an American Spring](#)" about structural racism.

[Andrew Costa](#) has spoken extensively with many media outlets, including [Global News](#), about the impact that the age and design of older long-term care homes has on the risk and infection-control outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He was also [quoted in the Hamilton Spectator](#) in an article about a personal support worker who had worked in the Rosslyn Retirement Residence and also worked for an agency that provided in-home care for an elderly couple. The worker contracted COVID-19 and infected the couple, one of whom died.

Costa also spoke to Global News about [what can be done to make long-term care \(LTC\) facilities safe for family members to start visiting the residents](#), and for residents to venture out again.

[Michel Grignon](#) was interviewed on CHCH-TV on May 27 about Ontario's over-reliance on long-term care facilities for seniors and the need to decrease the number of privately owned long-term care homes.

[Hsien Seow](#) spoke to CBC radio on April 23 for a story about using COVID tracking apps on cell phones entitled: "[Can we protect digital privacy amid push to use phone data to fight COVID-19 spread?](#)"

[Health Policy PhD Student Dr. Amina Jabbar](#), a geriatrician and medical doctor, wrote an opinion piece for the *Toronto Star* with Dr. Danyaal Raza, Chair of Canadian Doctors for Medicare, about [keeping profit out of long-term care](#). She also joined Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Andrea Horwath for an on-line news conference in advance of a virtual NDP summit about the future of long-term care. Their [conversation was covered by media outlets around the province](#). Jabbar is supervised by [Andrew Costa](#).

## Graduate students

[Health Policy PhD candidate Ahmednur Ali](#) received the Keith Leppmann Teaching Assistant Excellence Award, a student-nominated award sponsored by the McMaster Graduate Student's Association. His supervisor is [John Lavis](#).

MD/PhD student [Alice Cavanagh](#) and PhD student [Manisha Pahwa](#) have each been awarded CIHR\_IRSC doctoral scholarships (valued at \$105,000 each over three

[responses to legal requests for hastened death: a systematic review and meta-synthesis of qualitative research](#). *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care*. 2020.

[Vanstone M, et al. Building organizational compassion amongst teams delivering end-of-life care in the ICU: The Three Wishes Project](#). 2020. *Palliative Medicine*.

[Walli-Attai M, Joseph P, Rosengren A, Chow CK, Sangarajan S, Lear SA, et al. Variations between women and men in risk factors, treatments, cardiovascular disease incidence and death in 27 high-income, middle-income, and low-income countries \(PURE\): a prospective cohort study](#). *The Lancet*. 2020. May.

[Wang C, Sweetman A. Delisting eye examinations from public health insurance: Empirical evidence from Canada regarding impacts on patients and providers](#). *Health Policy*. 2020. Mar 19. pii: S0168-8510(20)30056-7.

[Wang J, Griffiths C, Simunovic M, Parpia S, Gu CS, Gafni A, et al. Simultaneous versus staged resection for synchronous colorectal liver metastases: A population-based cost analysis in Ontario, Canada - Health economic evaluation](#). *International Journal of Surgery*. 2020. (78) 75-82.



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years). Both are enrolled in the HP PhD program and both are supervised by [Meredith Vanstone](#).

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