

Media Release



Lakehead University researchers received more than \$1.3 million from CIHR in 2022

(February 9, 2023 – Thunder Bay, ON) The Canadian Institutes of Health Research is providing more than \$1.3 million in grants to researchers at Lakehead University.

Dr. Alla Reznik is a Physics Professor at Lakehead University and a scientist at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute who is receiving \$738,226 to explore a new way to diagnose prostate cancer in men.

“The goal of this research is to improve prostate cancer diagnosis by accurately establishing where in the broad spectrum of this disease a particular tumor lies and to identify its true aggressiveness,” said Dr. Reznik, who is the Canada Research Chair in the Physics of Molecular Imaging.

She and her team will achieve this goal over five years by developing a next-generation imaging system based on a combination of prostate-targeted Positron Emission Tomography and transrectal ultrasound imaging.

“Our research will advance the field of prostate cancer detection beyond the current standard of care and will result in an improvement of prostate cancer survival – yielding significant clinical benefits,” Dr. Reznik said.

Her co-applicants include researchers from the London Regional Cancer Program, and the University of Western Ontario. Radialis Medical is the partner organization.

Two PhD students and one Master of Science student will assist with this research.

Dr. Anna Kone, Associate Professor in the Department of Health Sciences, is receiving more than \$293,000 to assess and understand the impacts of the pandemic on people from the Black and Indigenous communities who have chronic diseases.

She and her team will perform this important research over two years.

“In the midst of the pandemic, there were reductions in service offering to respond to the crisis,” Dr. Kone said.

“Inevitably, this impacted the care of those already having difficulty navigating the system for their ongoing health needs, including patients with cancer, diabetes, dementia, etc.,” she said.

Dr. Kone will provide recommendations for policy responses and care approaches, informed by anti-oppressive and intersectional ways, overall and for future emergencies.

She and her team will use a mixed-method approach including a survey and interviews. The study will look at Northwestern Ontario, including rural areas and Indigenous communities, plus Black communities in the Greater Toronto Area.

Dr. Lana Ray, from Lakehead's Department of Indigenous Learning, and Dr. Elaine Wiersma from Lakehead's Department of Health Sciences, are assisting in this study along with researchers from the University of Toronto.

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Multiple Indigenous and Black community-based organizations are also involved and partners in the study, including Waasegiizhiq Nanaandawe'iwewiqamiq Health Access Centre (WNHAC), the Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre, Entité 3, and Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority.

Two first-year Master of Health Sciences students are participating in the research and a recent Master of Public Health graduate is the research coordinator.

Dr. Christopher Mushquash, a Psychology Professor at Lakehead University, and his team are receiving a \$250,000 grant to develop content-specific and culturally relevant practices that will transform youth mental health services in Indigenous contexts.

Dr. Mushquash is a clinical psychologist. He is a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Mental Health and Addiction, a professor at NOSM University, Vice-President of Research at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC), and Chief Scientist at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute (TBRHRI).

The team will conduct this research over one year on behalf of Access Open Minds, the first pan-Canadian youth mental health network.

Six Indigenous community partners are included in the research: Elsipogtog First Nation (NB), Eskasoni First Nation (NS), Sturgeon Lake First Nation (Sask.), Puvirnituq (Nunavik, Que.), the Cree Nation of Mistissini (Que.), and Ulukhaktok (Inuvialuit Settlement Region, NWT).

Access Open Minds has informed the development of and has since collaborated with provincial integrated youth service networks, such as Aire Ouverte, Foundry, Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario/YWHO).

AOM is a network of youth mental health service providers, researchers, families and youth who have been working over the past seven years to test and evaluate a transformed method of providing youth mental health care.

"Our team will develop wise practices and recommendations for the implementation of context specific and culturally relevant youth services in Indigenous contexts, informed by an understanding of the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous community sites and stakeholders," Dr. Mushquash said.

"We will be guided by a community participatory approach grounded in Indigenous knowledge and approaches as guided by the AOM Indigenous Council. We will employ multiple methods to meet the research objectives including a case study approach to generate a narrative case study for each of the six Indigenous sites," he added.

Dr. Andrew P. Dean, Lakehead's Vice-President, Research and Innovation congratulated each researcher who received a grant and thanked the CIHR for funding these important projects.

"Lakehead University continues to be a leader in health science research in Northwestern Ontario. As these projects demonstrate, we have amazing diversity and extremely applied research in many important areas in health sciences."

In 2021/22, Lakehead University received nearly \$2 million in assistance from the Research Support Fund to support the indirect costs of research, which includes costs for supporting the management of intellectual property, research and administration, ethics and regulatory compliance, research resources, and research facilities.

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New CIHR Grants 2022

Total funding: \$1,381,604.

Catalyst Grant: Quadruple Aim and Equity – One-Year Grant

Dr. Brianne Wood, Adjunct Professor, Department of Health Sciences, “Mobilizing and Evaluating a Multi-level Learning Health System: Examining the Influence and Impacts of Northern, Rural, and Remote Context”, \$100,000.

- Principal Knowledge User
 - Kelly Meservia-Collins, NOSM University Centre for Social Accountability
- Co-applicants
 - Dr. Erin Cameron, Northern Ontario School of Medicine University
 - Dr. Christopher Mushquash, Director of the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research, Lakehead University, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Mental Health, Department of Psychology, Chief Scientist, Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute
 - Andrea Raynak, Lakehead University
- Knowledge User
 - Bonnie Nicholas, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre

Implementation Science on Standards for Integrated Youth Services in Canada Grant – One-Year Grant

Dr. Chris Mushquash, Department of Psychology, “Lakehead University, “Developing Context-specific and Culturally Relevant Wise Practices for Transforming Youth Mental Health Services in Indigenous Contexts”, \$250,000.

- Principal Applicant
 - Dr. Srividya Iyer, McGill University
- Co-applicants
 - Dr. Paul Arnold, University of Calgary
 - Lacey Augustine, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
 - Dr. Skye Barbic, University of British Columbia
 - Dr. Patricia Boksa, McGill University
 - Gregory Brass, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
 - Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos, University of Calgary
 - Dr. Manuela Ferrari, McGill University
 - Laura Gagnon, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Toronto)
 - Hayley Gould, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
 - Katherine Hay, Alberta Health Services
 - Dr. Joanna Henderson, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Toronto)
 - Dr. Renee Linklater, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Toronto)
 - Aileen MacKinnon, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
 - Carolyn Melro, Dalhousie University
 - Dr. Aislin Mushquash, Department of Psychology, Lakehead University

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- Dr. Valerie Noel, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
- Dr. Jai Shah, McGill University
- Dr. Elaine Toombs, Department of Psychology, Lakehead University
- Principal Knowledge Users
 - Cliff Ballantyne, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
 - Dr. Heather Rudderham, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
- Knowledge User
 - Edmund Morris, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
- Collaborators
 - Casey Eagle Speaker, Hull Services
 - Meghan Etter, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
 - Karlee Francis, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
 - Norma Rabbitskin, ACCESS Open Minds (Montreal)
 - Ruth Scalplock, Hull Services
 - Valerie Sipos, Hull Services

Operating Grant: Addressing the Wider Health Impacts of COVID-19 – Two-Year Grant

Dr. Anna Kone, Department of Health Sciences, “Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic Response on Chronic Disease Management (CDM) and Quality of Life (QOL) Among Indigenous and Black Communities in Ontario”, \$293,378.

- Principal Applicant
 - Dr. Lana Ray, Department of Indigenous Learning
- Co-applicants
 - Dr. Miranda Lesperance, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
 - Dr. Notisha Massaquoi, University of Toronto
 - Dr. Elaine Wiersma, Department of Health Sciences, Lakehead University
- Knowledge User
 - Wangari Tharao, Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre
- Principal Indigenous Knowledge Keeper and User
 - Serena Joseph, Executive Director, Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig Health Access Centre

Project Grant – Five-Year Grant

Dr. Alla Reznik, Department of Physics, “Prostate-targeted PET/TRUS Dual-modality Imaging System for Diagnosis and Image-guided Biopsy”, \$738,226.

- Co-applicants:
 - Dr. Glenn Bauman, London Regional Cancer Program
 - Dr. Aaron Fenster, Robarts Research Institute - U.W.O. (London, Ont.)
 - Dr. Stephen Pautler, University of Western Ontario
- Partner Organization
 - Radialis Medical

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Lakehead University

Lakehead University is a fully comprehensive university with approximately 9,700 full-time equivalent students and over 2,000 faculty and staff at two campuses in Orillia and Thunder Bay, Ontario. Lakehead has nine faculties, including Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Health & Behavioural Sciences, Law, Natural Resources Management, Science & Environmental Studies, and Social Sciences & Humanities. Lakehead University's achievements have been recognized nationally and internationally, including being ranked in the top half of Times Higher Education's 2023 World Universities Rankings for the fourth consecutive year, and the number one university in the world with fewer than 10,000 students in THE's 2022 Impact Rankings (which assesses institutions against the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals). Visit www.lakeheadu.ca.