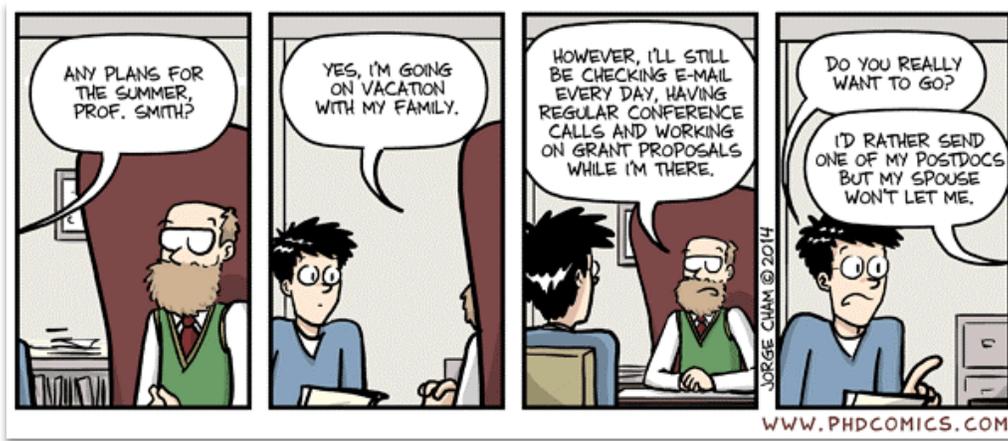


COPE II NEWSLETTER

August 2021

COPE II Team: Fiona Webster (Principal Investigator), Laura Connoy (Research Associate), Kathleen Rice, Craig Dale, Joel Katz, Abhimanyu Sud, Ross Upshur, Andrew Pinto.
Students/trainees: Riana Longo, Michelle Solomon, Bayan Aalilyani and Ryan Chan.



TEAM UPDATES

As you all may now know, our COPE II team is growing! Please welcome Michelle Solomon, Riana Longo, and Heather McDowell.



Michelle Solomon is a PhD candidate in nursing at Western University. Her clinical background involves over ten years in mental health acute care and community nursing. She is the past founder and executive director of a not-for-profit consumer-survivor peer support organization that provided support, education, and outreach to individuals affected by mental illness. Michelle's research interests include the role of psychosocial supports in mental health promotion and prevention. Her dissertation explores how youth living with bipolar disorder describe their understanding of and experiences of spirituality. Her research aims for a better understanding of spiritual health to promote the holistic practice of mental health care. Michelle is joining the team as a Graduate Research Assistant.



Riana Longo is an MScN student with research interests in the intersectionality of chronic pain, the social determinants of health, and inequities. She is also interested in the use of multimodal and holistic treatment options for chronic pain management. She is an RN working in a specialized chronic pain management program at St. Joseph's Health Care in London. Riana is joining the team as a Graduate Research Assistant.

Heather McDowell will be our team's new Administrative Assistant. She has training in human resources and experience in editorial and managerial work. She also has an interesting background in the arts, which fits well with our podcast project! Heather will be responsible for all administrative aspects of the study, so you will be in touch with her at some point in the future.

Congratulations to **Bayan Aalilyani**, who you may recall helped us with the first scoping review. Bayan successfully defended her PhD in 2021. Congratulations Dr. Aalilyani!

CONFERENCES AND INVITED TALKS

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we have decided to limit the number of conferences we participate in this year due to the pandemic. We presented our research at four different conferences this year, and are hoping to really ramp up next year if pandemic restrictions loosen. Below is the list of conference presentations:

1. Webster, F. Invited talk. *Health equity, social determinants of health and disparities in chronic pain care*. Sick Kids' annual Conquering the Hurt Conference "Together Through Global Connections" on November 2nd, 2021.
2. Webster F, Connoy L, Rice K, Dale C, Upshur R, Sud A, Pinto A, and Katz J. *The work of patients who manage chronic pain alongside mental illness, poverty and addiction*. International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) World Congress on Pain. June 2021.
3. Webster F., Rice K., and Dale C. The experience of nurses in providing care to patients with chronic pain in remote communities: an ethnographic study. International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) World Congress on Pain. June 2021.
4. Connoy L and Webster F. *Understanding the social determinants of health from the standpoint of patients: An institutional ethnography of mental health, addictions and poverty in the lives of people with chronic pain*. Legacy 2020 Research Conference, Western University, London, ON. May 2021.
5. Aalilyani B, Chan R, Connoy L and Webster F. *Exploring patient engagement and the use of opioids in managing chronic pain: A scoping review*. Legacy 2021 Research Conference, Western University, London, ON. May 2021.
6. Connoy, L., Alilyyani, B., Chan, R., Sud, A., Pinto, A., Dale, C., Katz, J., Rice, K., Upshur, R., and Webster, F. *A critical scoping review of patient engagement in*

research of people with lived experience of poverty and opioid use. Canadian Pain Society. Virtual poster presentation. April 2021.

7. Connoy, L., Sud, A., Pinto, A., Dale, C., Katz, J., Rice, K., Upshur, R., and Webster, F. *Inequitable outcomes: Understanding chronic pain experiences among marginalized groups.* Canadian Pain Society. Virtual poster presentation. April 2021.

We were invited to virtually present our initial findings of the COPE II study at University of Toronto's Interfaculty Pain Curriculum, using a voice-over power point presentation narrated by Laura. The presentation was entitled *COPE II: An institutional ethnography of mental health, addictions and poverty in the lives of people with chronic pain: A presentation on voices from the margins.* Approximately 1,000 students from health disciplines across UofT including medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and physician assistants take part in this series. We truly enjoyed putting this presentation together and received great feedback from attendees.

WRITING AND PUBLICATIONS

We made up for time off from conferences with writing! Our team is currently working on 5 papers. We have already been in touch with some of you about these papers and many of you have contributed your time and expertise to the writing process. As always, please let us know if we have missed you and you would like to be involved as a co-author on any papers listed below.

1. *Chronic struggle: the situated experience of marginalization and chronic pain.* In this first paper based on the COPE II findings, we present the stories of people who are marginalized and living with chronic pain and argue that their diverse and multi-faceted experiences are better understood by the term "chronic struggle" rather than "chronic pain". This term allows the focus to be patient-centred and de-centres the medical. You have provided feedback on the first draft and we will be sending out a second draft shortly.
2. *The sociology of chronic pain: an addendum:* The purpose of this paper, led by Laura, is to review the contributions of sociology to the study of chronic pain, with an emphasis on examining its critical edge. Although sociological research exists on chronic pain, we have yet to see the emergence of a subfield within the discipline, specifically a critical sociology of chronic pain. A critical sociology of chronic pain has the potential to unveil deeper understandings of chronic pain, at both individual and societal levels.
3. *Models of chronic pain: a call for a new way forward.* This paper will be a direct follow up with Paper #2. We will examine the dominant models of pain that inform how chronic pain is understood – biomedical and biopsychosocial. This is not intended to represent a detailed overview, but rather to call attention to the patterns and problematics of these models to pain. We highlight how social scientists are meaningfully bringing in the social into (chronic) pain research so as to decentre the biomedical and call attention to systemic and structural inequities.

4. *Exploring patient engagement and the use of opioids in managing chronic pain: A scoping review.* Most of you provided feedback on our scoping review related to patient engagement among people who are marginalized and living with chronic pain. We realized that our search terms were inadequate and so are now conducting a second search. We have partnered with Meagan Stanley, a UWO librarian who is assisting with the search design. Michelle and Riana will be working on reviewing abstracts and abstracting data and we will circle back to you with our new findings soon.
5. *People with lived experience critique pain catastrophizing: survey results.* In the sixth paper, we are drawing on data collected by the Stanford team (Fiona is leading the analysis of the qualitative component of the Stanford University survey on pain catastrophizing) to analyze patient responses to the concept “pain catastrophizing”.

Our tentatively titled podcast, “*Painful Bodies, Painful Lives*” – As you all know, we are in the process of developing our podcast series. Fiona and Laura met with Paula Burrows this summer who will be helping us with the development and distribution of the podcast. We have drafted one episode and are looking forward to the next! We thank those of you who shared their ideas about the podcast at our last team meeting in April.

GRANTS

We have some **VERY** exciting news when it comes to grants.

- **CIHR Fall Project Grant Competition: *Chronic pain and poverty in a time of pandemic***
 - This past spring, we learned that our project received **\$160,650** in funding. Co-Investigators on this project are: Abhi, Kate, Joel, Craig, Andrew, and Ross. We are now recruiting participants for this study and look forward to collecting data. Interestingly, one of the reviewer comments was that our study would be “out of date” given that the pandemic was about to end. We wish!
- **SSHRC Partnership Grant, Stage 1: *“Toward democratization of health: a sociological exploration of patient engagement in pain”***
 - Also this spring, we learned that our project received **\$20,000** in funding to work on Stage 2 of the grant, due October 29th. We will be hiring a project consultant, Dawn Richards, PhD, to help with the next stage. Overall, we partnered with **8** organizations and **16** co-applicants. As stated by the Executive Director of our key partner organization, Pain BC, we are looking forward to “*taking this over the finish line*”!



OTHER NEWS

Patient and Community Advocacy Committee (PCAC). We currently have 4 members, comprising a PhD trained harm reduction nurse, an Indigenous elder who specializes in chronic pain management, a policy expert in addictions and mental health, and a PhD trained psychologist, and we plan to host an introductory meeting soon.

NEXT TEAM MEETING

We plan to host another team meeting by the end of the summer. This meeting will focus on the first paper on chronic struggle and Fiona will share with us a medicine wheel that was given to her by Elder Kathryn McCooney, of Four Nations Coalition of Indigenous Medicine and expert in chronic pain management. So please check your inboxes soon for date inquiries from Heather.

Looking forward to speaking again with you all!