



research4health.ca



More Health Research, Better Health Care

401-17 York St.
Ottawa, ON
K1N 5S7

www.rc-rc.ca

info@rc-rc.ca

613-234-5129

Health research has a direct impact on advancements in health care. Consider, for example, how the discovery of insulin by Canadian researchers Banting and Best has impacted the lives of 2 million Canadians living with diabetes. Canadian health researchers continue to make discoveries everyday that are improving the health of Canadians, advancing patient care and the delivery of health services. Below are two recent examples.

Lawson Health App

"The most common cause of death among people with psychotic or mood disorders is suicide," says Dr. Cheryl Forchuk, a Scientist and Assistant Director at Lawson Health Research Institute, London, Ontario. "That is why maintaining communication between patients and community-based care providers is essential to preventing re-admission to treatment, homelessness and worse outcomes."

Dr. Forchuk, with the help of Canada Health Infoway found just the way to bridge this communication gap when chronic mental health patients from the mental health programs at London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care London, as well as from community agencies, were provided with a Lawson Health App loaded onto free smartphones. This app helped them manage their symptoms and placed them in immediate contact with a community health team. The results demonstrated great improvement in their quality of life and reduced need for re-admission into bedded psychiatric facilities.

"With this technology, mental health patients can now just send their care providers a secure text message saying 'This is what's going on right now.' As care providers, we will be much better able to help and intervene earlier," says Dr. Forchuk.

The Power of Ultrasound Waves

A non-invasive brain procedure that uses ultrasound waves is offering new hope to patients suffering from hand tremors that make simple tasks such as drinking, writing and buttoning up a shirt, extremely challenging. "It's exciting because it's, essentially, a new form of technology," says Dr. Kevin Imrie, physician-in-chief at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and professor of medicine at the University of Toronto.

The technique, developed by a Sunnybrook colleague, can replace risky surgeries, Imrie notes. It allows focused ultrasound, guided by magnetic resonance imaging, to target the cells deep within the brain causing the tremors. Patients experienced immediate improvements following the procedure and three months later there was an 81 per cent reduction in tremors.

The Standing Committee on the Future of Science and Technology in Canada, chaired by Senator Michael Kirby, concluded in 2002

...that countries with a strong health research network are more capable of translating advances and innovations into cost-effective health services, modern and internationally competitive policy and regulatory frameworks, new or adaptive products, and new health promotion activities. An energetic health research environment contributes to improved health, higher quality of life, and an efficient health care system.¹

More health research does lead to better health care!

1. Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, (2002). *The Health of Canadians The Federal Role. Final Report on the State of the Health Care System in Canada Volume Six: Recommendations for Reform.* p. 207. Ottawa: Author. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/372/soci/rep/repoct02vol6-e.pdf>