



Canadian
Frailty
Network

Réseau canadien
des soins aux
personnes fragilisées



New Brunswick
Health Research
Foundation



Fondation de la
recherche en santé
du Nouveau-Brunswick

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Canadian Frailty Network and New Brunswick Health Research Foundation announce projects funded by the Frailty and Aging Research Engagement (FARE) Initiative

Fredericton, NB – December 4, 2018 – The Canadian Frailty Network (CFN) and the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation (NBHRF) have announced the latest projects funded by the CFN-NBHRF Frailty and Aging Research Engagement (FARE) initiative.

This fund is used to pursue research and knowledge translation in the area of older adults living with frailty. New Brunswick has Canada's highest concentration of citizens over 65. FARE was introduced to address the needs of these vulnerable New Brunswickers.

The projects funded address issues often experienced by older adults living with frailty: hospital-to-home transitions, the social effects of moving to assisted living, home support following surgery, and retaining mobility: Suzanne Dupuis Blanchard of the Université de Moncton for her study titled [*Social Frailty in Recently Relocated Semi-Independent Older Adults*](#), Rose McCloskey of the University of New Brunswick and Pamela Jarrett of Horizon Health Network for their study titled [*Optimizing transitions from hospital to home for frail older adults: a mixed method study to examine how hospital discharge plans translate into supportive home care environments*](#), Keith Brunt of Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick and Jean-Francois Légaré of the New Brunswick Heart Centre for their study titled [*Benefit of a Telehealth home-monitoring program for patients living with frailty undergoing heart surgery*](#), and Danielle Bouchard of the University of New Brunswick, Linda Caissie of St. Thomas University and Grant Handigran of Université de Moncton for their study titled [*Stand if You Can*](#).

“We are excited to support these projects that significantly contribute to the development of innovative products, services and practices that will help to ensure the best aging experience possible,” says Leah Carr, Interim Executive Director of NBHRF.

“With these grants, the Canadian Frailty Network partners with NBHRF on research that focuses on day-to-day issues of concern to older adults and their families and caregivers. These are exciting projects that will offer practical solutions designed to make a meaningful difference and deliver real-world outcomes,” says Dr. John Muscedere, Scientific Director and CEO of CFN.

More information on the FARE initiative is available at www.nbhrf.com, and more information on CFN's frailty research and knowledge translation activities is available at www.cfn-nce.ca.

About the Canadian Frailty Network.

Canadian Frailty Network (www.cfn-nce.ca / [@CFN_NCE](https://twitter.com/CFN_NCE)) is Canada's sole network devoted to improving care for older Canadians living with frailty and supporting their families/caregivers. We do this by increasing frailty recognition and assessment, increasing evidence for decision-making, advancing evidence-based changes to care, educating the next generation, and engaging with older adults and caregivers. Our work spans all settings of care, from acute and critical care to community care, and includes end-of-life care and advance care planning. Canadian Frailty Network is funded by the [Government of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence \(NCE\) program](#). The NCE program's goal is to mobilize collaborations between researchers, industry and other organizations to produce programs and products that further Canada's economic strength and improve the quality of life of Canadians.

About the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation

The NBHRF (nbhrf.com / [@NBHRF](https://twitter.com/NBHRF)) is an independent organization governed by a board of directors comprised of key stakeholders from the health research community in New Brunswick. Provincial funding is provided by the Regional Development Corporation – Total Development Fund, the Department of Health - Medical Research Fund (MRF) and the Department of Social Development - Wellness Research Fund (WRF) for NBHRF health research programs (HRP), health strategic initiatives (HRI) with federal tri-councils, national health charities and private sector, and the Strategic Investment in Health Research Innovations (SIHRI). The foundation's mission is to provide leadership and support building health research capacity, improve the health of New Brunswickers and advance the knowledge economy.

Media Contacts:

Kate Cooke, Communications Manager, Canadian Frailty Network, Tel: 613-549-6666, x. 2834; Mobile: 613-888-0315, kate@cfn-nce.ca

Patricia Seaman, Senior Communications Officer, New Brunswick Health Research Foundation, Tel: 506-455-0471; Mobile: 506-476-5327, patricia.seaman@nbhrf.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECTS, SEE THE SUMMARY ATTACHED.



Projects funded by the Frailty and Aging Research Engagement (FARE) Initiative

[Optimizing transitions from hospital to home for older adults living with frailty: a mixed method study to examine how hospital discharge plans translate into supportive home care environments](#)

Rose McCloskey, RN, PhD, University of New Brunswick

Pamela Jarrett, MD, FRCPC, FACP, Horizon Health Network

With Canada's aging population, there is even more pressure for health and social services providers to ensure proper care for older adults living with frailty. This is particularly true in New Brunswick (NB) where the number of seniors is growing quickly. Most older adults prefer to stay in their homes as long as possible, but this can put significant pressure on service providers responsible for identifying needs and coordinating care in the home, especially hospital-based geriatric service providers who work primarily with seniors living with frailty who may have experienced recent complicated medical issues. Planning and putting into action discharge plans to successfully move people back to their homes can be complicated, and often requires the involvement of a variety of health professionals from a range of settings.

This study will map the process of planning hospital-to-home moves of older adults living with frailty who are discharged from hospital-based, specialized geriatric units to their home in the community in three cities in NB. The goal is to develop practical recommendations for policy makers and clinicians on how to have successful hospital-to-home transitions for senior and their families.

Patients, family members and front-line staff are involved in every aspect of this study, including its design and implementation. This helps ensure the research is highly relevant to them, and that they have a voice in how transitional care is organized and delivered.

[Social Frailty in Recently Relocated Semi-Independent Older Adults](#)

Suzanne Dupuis-Blanchard, PhD, Université de Moncton

Older adults want to stay in their homes for as long as possible but not all older adults are able to live on their own in the traditional family home. Among those older adults who move out of their home, some tend to relocate too early while others may become helpless or vulnerable. Research on vulnerable seniors have ignored the social aspects of vulnerability such as losing one's driver's license or not speaking with someone every day.

The province of New Brunswick is already feeling the effects of having a lot of seniors and is the perfect location to do research on vulnerable older adults. The purpose of this study is to improve our understanding of the social elements of vulnerability with older adults that have recently moved into an assisted living facility. More precisely, the study wants to 1) understand the impact of social elements in older adult's decision to move from home, 2) explore whether moving helps or worsens social vulnerability, and 3) evaluate vulnerability in seniors who have moved into assisted living.

Older adults who have recently moved to assisted living will be consulted about why they moved. A questionnaire will help evaluate the level of vulnerability of the group. The results from this study will help put in place interventions that help vulnerable seniors, and will be shared with community groups, government and other researchers.

[Benefit of a Telehealth home-monitoring program for patients living with frailty undergoing heart surgery](#)

Keith Brunt, MD, Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick

Jean-François Légaré, MD, New Brunswick Heart Centre/Horizon Health Network

Heart surgery is increasingly sought after and available for older individuals living with some degree of vulnerability also referred to as frail. Unfortunately, being frail means that after surgery patients have a higher risk of complications and have a harder time returning home in a timely manner and staying home. This study will test how an emerging technology called Telehealth home-monitoring can help patients return home while remaining in contact with their health care team via telephone or video link for the first 30 days after surgery. The hypothesis is that this Telehealth intervention will allow patients to make their transition home more successful and result in fewer visits to the emergency room (ER) or needing to be re-admitted to the hospital after discharge. The study will:

- Objective 1: review data from the last 5 years at the NB Heart Centre (NBHC) documenting the experience and difficulties lived by older frail patients undergoing heart surgery with particular attention on their struggles returning home and remaining functional
- Objective 2: create a comprehensive education program and Telehealth intervention to help transition home
- Objective 3: Implement and measure the benefit of our intervention in 120 consecutive patients compared to historical data obtained in objective 1 prior to the intervention

[Stand if You Can](#)

Danielle Bouchard, PhD, CEP, University of New Brunswick

Linda Caissie, PhD, St. Thomas University

Grant Handrigan, PhD, Université de Moncton

Excessive time spent seated is linked to health issues and this can be even more serious for older adults who are living with frailty. It is thus important to identify how to reduce time spent seated in this population and understand if it is worth doing so. Residents in long term care settings are concerned about their ability to remain physically capable of doing things they enjoy. Among other things, this study will examine whether sitting less over a period of six months can improve walking speed, which predicts how one is able to be move around independently.

Four New Brunswick nursing homes will participate in this study. Other than walking speed, the study will evaluate whether sitting less impacts things like blood sugar levels, symptoms of depression, and friendship among participants. In addition, family, staff and other residents think will be consulted about this idea of sitting less.

Interested residents will gather into groups around a table to discuss different topics, share jokes, and eat snacks, three times a day, every other day, while standing. The goal will be for each participant to stand for a total of 30 minutes for each day they participate in the study (10 minutes / 3 times per day), while under supervision. To ensure results are due to sitting less, another group of residents will be offered the same group-based activities while staying seated. This study will be the first to reduce sitting time for residents in nursing homes and evaluate potential benefits.