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# Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health

E-Newsletter: Issue # 38



Beryl F. Pilkington (left), Professor Emerita, School of Nursing and Nazilla Khanlou (right), Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health, Faculty of Health, York University

# Hello everyone!

Our Office's e-newsletter for 2023 provides information on our and our Office affiliates' research, knowledge transfer activities, and events.

In December we were honoured by a visit from Professor Emerita Pilkington, with whom I had the privilege of co-editing the book "Women's Mental Health: Resistance and Resilience in Community and Society" in (2015).

Nazilla Khanlou Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health Faculty of Health, York University

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#### **SECTION 1. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER EVENTS**



Virtual Book Launch Webinar. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2023, we held a Virtual Book Launch Webinar: The Stories Around Us: Mental Health Narratives of South Asian Women. The event was organized by the York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR) and the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health (OWHC). After introduction and welcome by Qiang Zha, Associate Professor, Interim Director YCAR the panelists took the floor. The event was moderated by Dr. Attia Khan, Postdoctoral Fellow OWHC. The speakers included Rana Khan, the author of book, Namrta Mohan, a registered psychotherapist, and Kripa Sekhar, the Executive Director of the South Asian Women's Centre (SAWC). The event was concluded by Nazilla Khanlou, Professor School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, York University and Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health. The event was a huge success with over 100 individuals who registered for the event.



On 18th of August 2023, the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health (OWHC) in collaboration with the Africans in Partnership Against Aids (APAA) organized a hybrid Community Event. Dr. Joyce Kamanzi, Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Scholar and Postdoctoral Visitor at the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health presented the findings from her study: Disability Experiences of Immigrant Families Living with HIV in Toronto at the community event. The event was attended by a large gathering of people living with HIV, service providers, academics, and students.

Virtual Community Workshop: Our Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health (OWHC) held a Virtual Community Workshop on April 14, 2023 with racialized families with developmental disabilities (DDs), racialized disability advocates, service providers, researchers, and students in attendance to discuss our Project: Equity-informed intersectoral KMb to address pandemic health disparities experienced by racialized families with developmental disabilities. The Workshop participants shared their views on the experiences of racialized families with DDs' in access to social support during and beyond the pandemic. We also shared the findings from our scoping review on social support for racialized families with DDs. This knowledge sharing further engaged the participants and stimulated deeper discussions.

## SECTION 2. UPCOMING EVENT - 7th LILLIAN MEIGHEN WRIGHT MATERNAL- CHILD HEALTH LEARNING ACADEMY



Our Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health, Faculty of Health, York University will be holding the 7th Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Learning Academy on the 15 and 17 July 2024 virtually.

The biennial event is organized by our Office and funded by the Lillian Meighen and Don Wright Foundation. In 2024 the Learning Academy will focus on the Impacts of Natural Disasters on Maternal-Child Health. The panel presentations, poster presentations and discussions on maternal-child health and wellbeing in the context of the Impacts of Natural Disasters at the event will promote co-learning and engagement among researchers, students, and practitioners.

#### SECTION 3. INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON YOUTH INTEGRATION (INYI) JOURNAL

We are pleased to announce the release of our Special Issue: Mothering in the academia during a pandemic: Structural gender inequalities and family wellbeing INYI Journal Volume 12, 2023. The open access journal articles are available on the INYI journal website: https://inyi.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/default/issue/view/15.

- Guest Editorial Attia Khan
- Research Article: Mothering in the Remote Academy: Building Bridges and Negotiating Isolation.

  Maggie Quirt
- Research Article: Sharing Stories of Mothering, Academia and the COVID 19 Pandemic: Multiple Roles, Messiness and Family Wellbeing.

  Hanneke Croxen, Margot Jackson, Mary Asirifi, & Holly Symonds-Brown
- Commentary: Resilience and Challenges of Working Mothers during COVID-19.
  Marina Heifetz
- Commentary: A liberdade é a coisa mais cara da vida (freedom is the most expensive thing in life). Luisa Santos
- ← Commentary: Academic mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Stressors, strains, and challenges in adapting to work-life enmeshment.
  - Chang Su, Tsorng-Yeh Lee & Gordon L. Flett
- Commentary: The Intersection of Motherhood and Academia During a Pandemic: A Storytelling Approach to Narrative Oral History.
  - Sandra Della Porta & Daniella Ingrao
- Research Article: Health promotion for immigrant mothers of children with developmental disabilities: Towards a transformative approach.
  - Luz Maria Vazquez, Nida Mustafa, Nazilla Khanlou, Attia Khan, Gail Jones, Jennifer Osei-Appiah Sodiya, Mahdieh Dastjerdi, & Louise Kinross
- Research Article: Effects of Stress, Social Support, Feelings of Shame, and Loss of Face on Mental Health of Chinese Immigrant Mothers of Children with Developmental Disabilities in Canada.

  Chang Su & Nazilla Khanlou

# Information Sheet # 19

# Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental

Social support for racialized families of children and youth with developmental disabilities: COVID-19 pandemic inequities

Khanlou N, Khan A, Vazquez LM, Pashang S, Gateri H, Ohiku T, Hutchinson N, Alawiye R

#### Introduction

People with disabilities face increased risk for exposure, complications, and death from the recent COVID-19 public health emergency (Shapiro, 2020; Turk et al, 2020). The pandemic lockdown, with disruption of services and support (Chung, 2020) and accessibility barriers to prevention and response measures (Eshraghi et al., 2020), increased the challenges associated for people with developmental disabilities (DDs) (Ameis et al., 2020). Racialized people with disabilities (including DDs), further face systemic disadvantages across their social determinants of health (John et al., 2016); the interlocking barriers to care position them at a high risk of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research findings suggest that social support mitigates the effects of stressors for families to promote the wellbeing of children / youth with DDs leading to positive outcomes (Khanlou et al., 2022; Khanlou et al., 2015).

Lack of data on the effects of the recent pandemic on people with DDs results in the inability of health surveillance systems to accurately determine the impact of the pandemic on marginalized populations and support needed (Turks et al., 2020). Increasing calls from racialized communities and disability advocates, scholars, and practitioners urge for the need to generate more data on the pandemic experiences of racialized people with DDs.



# Our study

The goal of our project was to advance knowledge mobilization (KMb) through an equity-informed intersectoral lens on pandemic health disparities experienced by racialized families of people with developmental disabilities. The project's objectives were to conduct a Virtual Community Workshop on COVID-19 health equity for racialized families with DDs, and to engage in knowledge translation and mobilization for and with racialized families with DDs.

The Workshop participants included racialized families with DDs, racialized disability advocates, service providers, researchers, and students. The 17 participants shared their views on racialized families with DDs' experiences in access to social support in the pandemic context. Findings from our scoping review on social support for racialized families with DDs were shared to stimulate the discussion.

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See the full Information Brief here: https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/06/Info-Sheet-19.June-2023.pdf?x46752

# **SECTION 5. PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

## **BOOK CHAPTERS**

★ Khanlou N, Vazquez LM, & Pashang S. (2023). Chapter 10: Gender-based violence and COVID-19 pandemic: Addressing a pervasive public health issue through an upstream multi-systems approach. In Santos L. (Editor). Cultures of silence: The power of untold narratives. Oxfordshire: Routledge (Taylor & Francis). (pp. 172-189)

## **JOURNAL ARTICLES/POLICY BRIEFS/REPORTS**

- ♣ Khanlou N, Khan A, Kurtz Landy C, Srivastava R, McMillan S, Vandevelde-Coke S, & Vazquez LM. (2023). Nursing care for persons with developmental disabilities: Review of literature on barriers and facilitators faced by nurses to provide care. Nursing Open, 10(2), 404-423. (Published online August 2022). https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/nop2.1338
- ♣ Khanlou N, Khan A, Pashang S, Vazquez LM, Gateri H, Hutchison N, & Ohiku T. (2023). Policy Brief. Guidelines to Address Pandemic Health Disparities Experienced by Racialized Families with Developmental Disabilities. York University. https://hdl.handle.net/10315/41566. <a href="https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/08/Policy-Brief-Social-Support-for-Racialized-families-with-DDs.Aug2023.pdf">https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/08/Policy-Brief-Social-Support-for-Racialized-families-with-DDs.Aug2023.pdf</a>
- ♣ Khanlou N, Khan A, Vazquez LM, Pashang S, Gateri H, Ohiku T, Hutchinson N, Alawiye R. (2023). Social support for racialized families of children and youth with developmental disabilities: COVID-19 pandemic inequities. Toronto, ON. York University. <a href="https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/06/Info-Sheet-19.June-2023.pdf?x46752">https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/06/Info-Sheet-19.June-2023.pdf?x46752</a>

#### **EDITORIALS**

★ Khan A. (2023). Editorial: Mothering in the academia during a pandemic: Structural gender inequalities and family wellbeing. INYI Journal Volume 12, Issue 1. https://doi.org/10.25071/1929-8471.139.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

- Khanlou N, Khan A, Vazquez, LM, Hasan N, Francis Xavier JM, Seto Nielsen L, and Nunes F, Davidson D, and Skop M. (October 20-21, 2023). Asian-Canadian youth's mental health barriers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring intersecting inequities through visual arts-based research methods. The 3rd Annual Canadian Children, Youth and Communities (CCYC) Health In Equity Conference. Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto.
- Khanlou N. (24 June 2023). Social Support for Racialized Families of Children / Youth with Developmental Disabilities. Mental Health (Developmental Disability, Autism): Impact on Racialized Communities and Solutions Global Women Ambassadors Canada & 3C Autism & Mental Health Support Services.
- ♣ Khan A, Vazquez LM & Khanlou N. (June 19, 2023). Advancing knowledge on health inequities experienced by racialized families with developmental disabilities in context of the pandemic. CARRFS (Canadian Alliance for Regional Risk Factor Surveillance) 2023 Symposium. Annual theme "Addressing the social determinants of health inequities through public health surveillance."
- Khan A, Vazquez LM, Kamanzi J, Francis Xavier JMV, Nunes F, Davidson D, Foster L & Khanlou N. (June 15, 2023). Social Support for Racialized Families of Youth with Developmental Disabilities: Health, Education, Employment, and Other Service Sectors. Department of Psychiatry Research Day, University of Toronto. In person at Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel.

- ↓ Iziduh S, Dhakal S, Sihota R, Ye A, Friedenreich CM, Khanlou N, Sabiston CM, Smith-Turchyn J, Tomasone JR, Gagliardi AR. Raising awareness about physical activity's role in reducing cancer risk: Qualitative interviews with immigrant women and community agency managers. 2023 Canadian Association for Health Services & Policy Research, Montreal, Quebec, May 30, 2023.
- ♣ Khanlou N, Vazquez LM, Hasan N, Khan A, Nunes F, Seto Nielson L, Davidson D, and Skop M. (May 28, 2023). Asian Canadian exclusionary experiences in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: Centering the voices of youth through arts-based methodologies. CSASA -ACESA Congress 2023 "Reckonings and Re-imaginings," Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, York University.
- ♣ Khan A & Khanlou N. (May 27, 2023). The Diasporic Experiences of Immigrant Pakistani Youths at the Intersection of Overlapping Identities and Mental Health. CSASA -ACESA Congress 2023 "Reckonings and Reimaginings," Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, York University.
- ♣ Khanlou N. (8 March 2023). Mental health support for racialized women at risk of gender-based violence during a global pandemic: An intersectionality-informed approach. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Seminar Series, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ottawa, Ontario.
- ♣ Khan A & Kamanzi J. (February 6, 2023). Barriers & Facilitators to Social Support for Racialized Families of Youth with DDs. Lunch n' Learn Meeting, South Asian Autism Awareness Centre (SAAAC).
- ♣ Khanlou N, Khan A, Vazquez LM, Vimalakanthan K, Kamanzi J, Washington D. Alamdar N. (Feb 8-9, 2023). A scoping review of the literature on social support needs of racialized families of youth with developmental disabilities. The Canadian Health and Wellbeing in Developmental Disabilities Conference (HWDD).
- ♣ Khanlou N. (29 January 2023). "The shadow pandemic": Gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Coping in Silence: COVID's Impact on Marginalized Communities, York Circle Lecture Series, York University.

## **MEDIA INTERVIEWS**

♣ Do all Refugees in Canada get adequate prenatal Care? MedScape (6 April 2023). N Khanlou interviewed. https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/990503?reg=1#vp\_3

## **EVENTS HOSTED**

Khanlou N. (Organizer and Moderator) with El-Masri MM (Toronto Metropolitan University), Baumbusch J and Bungay V (University of British Columbia). (12 June 2023). Virtual Presentation by inaugural Guest Speaker: Professor Sally Thorne, UBC School of Nursing. Pan-Canadian Nursing Research Methods Webinar hosted by the Pan-Canadian Collective of Nursing Educators and Researchers.

#### **SECTION 6. ONGOING RESEARCH**

Professor Nazilla Khanlou, Chair of this Office, along with colleagues engaged in research for the following projects:

- **SSHRC Insight Grant** (2022-2025). Asian-Canadian youth identities in a pandemic era: Arts-based research.
- **SSHRC Insight Development Grant** (2022-2024). Social support for racialized families of youth with developmental disabilities: Intersectionality informed research.
- **SSHRC Exchange KMB Grant** (2023-2023) Equity-informed intersectoral KMb to address pandemic health disparities experienced by racialized families with developmental disabilities.

#### SECTION 7. OUR OFFICE AFFILIATES' ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We are proud to share with you the academic and research achievements and interests of our Office's affiliates.

- ♣ Dr. Luz Maria Vazquez is the research coordinator of the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health in the Faculty of Health at York University. She is also a contract faculty at the Department of Social Science and at the Department of Human Rights and Equity Studies at York University. She brings more than ten years of experience in a research center in Mexico where she acquired strong research skills based on extensive ethnographic and qualitative work in Latin American contexts Mexico, Belize and Guatemala. She is completing a study titled: Gender and Climate Change: Vulnerabilities and Adaptation in Coastal Communities in Costa Rica through a research award funded by York University.
- ♣ Dr. Attia Khan is the Postdoctoral fellow with our Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health. Dr. Khan has a PhD in Health Policy and Equity from Faculty of Health, York University. She is a trained medical doctor (international) and has a MSc. in Public Health. Dr. Khan also teaches at York University and University of Toronto Scarborough as a contract faculty. Dr. Khan also completed a Post Doctoral Fellowship at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health examining HIV, employment, and quality of life. Her research has focussed on community-based research in developmental disabilities' health, immigrant mental health, youth identity, maternal healthcare, HIV/AIDS to medical education.
- → **Dr. Candice Christmas** successfully defended her doctoral thesis titled "Don't Let Things You Have Done Define You!" thus having completed her PhD in Health Policy and Equity at York University under the supervision of Dr. Khanlou. Congratulations to Candice Christmas! Dr. Christmas has been a recipient of the Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Scholarship and the Penelope Jane Glasser Award. She is currently the Project Engagement Manager for a Health Canada funded initiative called *Support Not Stigma*.
- → **Dr. Joyce Kamanzi** recently completed the Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Fellowship in Maternal-Child Health at York University focussing on a study on the *Disability Experiences of Immigrant Families Living with HIV in Toronto*. Dr. Kamanzi is a registered nurse with a PhD from the Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta, Canada. She previously worked as Quality Manager in Rwanda. Her doctoral research focused on exploring the experiences of mothers using the Prevention Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) Program to prevent HIV transmission.
- Josephine M Francis Xavier is a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Nursing at York University. Josephine was awarded the Tylenol® Fund to Advance Diversity in Nursing and Health Equity Research Scholarship by the Canadian Nurses Foundation (CNF) for a two-year term in June 2022. Her doctoral research is titled Fathering and fatherhood in the perinatal period: A Straussian Grounded Theory approach. Josephine is also a nurse educator with 24 years of teaching experience in India, Kuwait, and Canada
- Danielle Washington is a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Nursing at York University. She recently received a Canada Graduate Scholarship CIHR Doctoral Research Award (CGS-D) accompanied with 3 year of funding. Danielle's nursing background is in the areas of mental health, long term care and academia. Her doctoral research is titled Exploring the Mental Well-Being of Black Women Living in Poverty and at Risk of Intimate Partner Violence.
- Deanna Black is a Doctoral student in the School of Nursing at York University and being supervised by Professor Khanlou. Deanna is a second-generation registered nurse, and completed a Master's in Nursing at York University. She is passionate about women's mental health and navigating some of the socio-cultural and systemic barriers they face. She is a nurse at a primary care clinic in Ontario.

- Nasteho Hasan is a Master's Thesis student in the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, York University. Nasteho is currently working as a Public Health Nurse in Toronto, focusing on chronic disease prevention among school age children and youth. Her Master's thesis is titled Asian Adolescent Experiences of Health-Related Stigma During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- ♣ Olivia Brown is a Master's thesis student in the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, York University. Olivia has over 10 years of diverse mental health experience and is currently working towards the completion of her master's thesis.
- ♣ Dr. Negar Alamdar has a PhD from York University and currently teaching courses as a sessional faculty member at the Department of Equity Studies at York University. She was a Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Fellow in Maternal-Child Health at York University under supervision of Dr. Nazilla Khanlou at the Office of Women's' health research at York University. Dr. Alamdar has been teaching at college in Social Service work and Gerontology program based on her experience as a front-line developmental service worker at Community Living Dufferin. She has experience working with vulnerable individuals who have experienced trauma (clients of Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture supporting mainly refugees) and North York Women Shelter.
- ♣ Dr. Chang Su is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Faculty of Science in Brandon University. Dr. Su completed her PhD in Social and Personality Psychology. She was a Lillian wright and Meighen Wright Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health in the Faculty of Health at York University. Dr. Su has been involved in cross-cultural research examining the effects of social and cultural factors on self-efficacy, and depression/ anxiety of Chinese immigrant mothers of children with developmental disabilities in Canada. Currently she is working on BURC funded research on psychological well-being of international students in universities in Canada under COVID-19.
- Amirtha Karunakaran completed her Masters in Global Health from York University. Her Major Research Project (MRP) titled *The COVID-19 experience amongst Canadian South Asian Parents of Children on the Autism Spectrum* explored the caregiving experiences among Canadian South Asian parents of children on the Autism spectrum during COVID-19. After working as a registered practical nurse for 10 years, Amirtha embarked on a new professional journey with the College of Nurses of Ontario as an Investigator under Professional Conduct.
- Sheena Madzima is a Women's Health Research in Mental health Office affiliate. She assisted in several projects throughout her studies and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology at York University, class of 2020. She was honoured to be the recipient of multiple awards including the Dr Eric Jackman Award and Lillian-Meighen Wright Award. She is currently working as a Medical Administrative Assistant with Unity Health Network in the Surgical Oncology Program at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. She is pursuing a career in medicine with an interest in applied research, focusing on the social determinants of health, to develop and implement solutions that mitigate risks and enhance access to health and social services for underserved/vulnerable communities.

## **SECTION 8. STUDY RECRUITMENT**

Our Office's research team and colleagues are conducting a research project titled *Social support for racialized* families of youth with developmental disabilities: Intersectionality informed research.

We are currently recruiting study participants!

If you are (or know of someone) who is a family caregiver of a young person (16-29 years) with developmental disabilities who self-identifies as Black, East Asian, or South Asian and would like to participate in our study please forward them our study flyer: <a href="https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/05/YADD-Flyer-Social-Support.May2023.pdf?x46752">https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/05/YADD-Flyer-Social-Support.May2023.pdf?x46752</a>

Also see the study flyer for service provider working in an organization/agency who serves or advocates for racialized families with youth (16-29 years) with developmental disabilities:

https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/05/Service-providers-Flyer-Social-Support.May2023.pdf?x46752



