

AGE-WELL Strategic Investment Program – April 2016 Projects

Investigator Name: Paul Yoo & Sasha John

Institution: University of Toronto

Project Title: Improved Treatment of Overactive Bladder

Overactive bladder (OAB) is an incurable urinary disorder that affects 18% of Canadian adults. Successful treatment can improve quality of life by alleviating anxiety, social withdrawal, depression, and preventing falls that come about when people urgently seek the bathroom. OAB is highly prevalent in falls (30%), which are the largest cause of injuries in adults over age 65. Current treatment options for OAB (and limitations) include: (a) pharmaceuticals (poor patient compliance/side effects); (b) spinal nerve stimulation (expensive and invasive implantable device); and (c) tibial nerve stimulation therapy (requires ongoing clinic-based treatment). The overall clinical efficacy of these therapies is notably limited. We have recently discovered a new nerve stimulation target that may provide improved treatment of OAB. The goal of this project is to show improved therapeutic benefit in patients with this novel treatment. The successful completion of this project will allow the introduction of new types of implantable devices and clinic-based treatments.

Investigator Name: Lili Liu

Institution: University of Alberta

Project Title: Consumer Guideline for Locator Technologies

Three out of five Canadians with dementia wander. Between 2010 and 2014, there was an increase in the number of adults who "wandered off," according to Statistics Canada. An Alberta study has shown that locator devices, which enable caregivers to monitor individuals with dementia, bring peace of mind for the caregiver. However, consumers do not have access to comparative information that can help them choose a locator product that meets their needs. The most frequently asked question of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario relates to these devices. The purpose of this project is to develop an online consumer guideline describing features of commercially-available locator technologies. Anticipated impacts: (a) Canadians caring for those with dementia will have an online resource about locator technology features; (b) locator-device manufacturers will describe product features using a consistent and user-friendly format; and (c) the format of this standard guideline can be used for other consumer products.

Investigator Name: Mark Oremus & Lisa Loiselle

Institution: University of Waterloo

Project Title: Engaging People Living with Dementia in Product Design, Testing, and Commercialization – A Case Study towards Developing Practice Standards

Increasingly, people with dementia want to be involved in the development of products and services that impact them. However, few resources currently exist to support entrepreneurs looking to engage people with dementia on technology projects. This project will explore how

entrepreneurs can engage people with dementia meaningfully and respectfully in the design, testing, and commercialization of information communication technologies (ICTs) intended for their use. We will monitor and document the engagement of people with dementia in design, testing, and commercialization of MemorySparx, a digital memory aid that is currently being developed by Emmetros. Data collected during this study will inform practical resources for entrepreneurs and people with dementia looking to collaborate on technology projects. Ideally, increased engagement of people with dementia will improve the usability and usefulness of products intended for them, enabling these individuals to live independently and with dignity.