



Message from the CLSA Research Team

In the year since our last update, the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) has recruited more than 30,000 participants who have taken part in the study through [telephone interviews](#) or [at-home interviews and visits to data collection sites](#), where physical assessments and biospecimen collection take place.

CLSA participants provide information about their physical, psychological and social health functioning. The vast amount of data generated from the CLSA will allow researchers to investigate previously unexplored areas of aging and make new connections between the factors that

have an impact on maintaining health as people age.

In the coming months, we will finalize and release the data from



Left to right: CLSA principal investigators Susan Kirkland of Dalhousie University, Parminder Raina of McMaster University and Christina Wolfson of McGill University.

the first 20,000 CLSA participants who have taken part in telephone interviews. In this newsletter, you will read more about the [data access](#) process.

It's been an exciting year for the CLSA. In addition to celebrating several recruitment milestones, we continued the implementation of our enabling units and raised the profile of the study through local and national media.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the support of our [funders](#) and the hard work of our researchers, collaborators and staff.

CLSA Launches

In early 2013, the CLSA held official launches of the [Halifax](#) and [Victoria](#) Data Collection Sites (DCS). Working in conjunction with Dalhousie University and University of Victoria, these sites welcomed members of the media and the local and university communities to tour the sites and learn more about the CLSA. Across Canada, there are 11 data collection sites that conduct physical assessments and collect biological specimens (blood and urine) from 30,000 CLSA participants.



Official launch of the Halifax CLSA site

In the News



The CLSA welcomed Joy Smith (left), Member of Parliament for Kildonan – St. Paul, for a [tour of the Winnipeg Data Collection Site](#) on March 12, 2013.

2013 Achievements in Health Research

CLSA researchers Larry Chambers and Lisa Dolovich were honoured by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Canadian Medical Association Journal with a [CIHR-CMAJ 2013 Top Canadian Achievements in Health Research Award](#).

CLSA featured on CBC The National

The CLSA was [featured](#) on CBC's The National in July 2013. The [story](#) explored new research findings that suggest people are living longer with better overall functioning. Parminder Raina, lead CLSA investigator, commented on the findings and discussed how the CLSA will add to the research.

CIHR-IA Advisory Board tours CLSA site



In September 2013, members of the CIHR Institute of Aging Advisory Board toured the Ottawa Data Collection Site. The visit was hosted by the Bruyère Research Institute and the CLSA.

Study Updates

Telephone Interviews

Twenty thousand of the CLSA participants are followed primarily through telephone interviews.

The main waves of data collection take place every three years and information on this national sample

is collected through a [60-minute questionnaire](#) by trained staff at [Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview \(CATI\) centres](#).

As of October 2013, more than 19,000 of the 20,000 had been recruited and had completed baseline telephone interviews across the country.

These data are in the process of being cleaned and prepared for access by approved researchers. We anticipate that the data will be ready in the spring of 2014. For more information, please see the Data Access section in this newsletter or visit the [Researchers section](#) on the CLSA website.

In-home Interviews & Data Collection Site Visits

Thirty thousand CLSA participants undergo more in-depth data collection.

The main waves of data collection every three years include face-to-face in-home interviews and visits to a data collection site. The visits take place at one of 11 CLSA data

collection sites (DCS). These 30,000 participants are being selected from within a 25-50 km of the sites.

The in-home interview lasts about [70-minutes and the in-person visit to the DCS lasts 2-3 hours](#).

At the sites, participants take part in extensive [physical assessments](#) and provide [blood and urine samples](#).

In 2012, ten CLSA data collection sites opened. Collectively, the sites

have welcomed more than 11,000 of the 30,000 participants as of October 2013. The final [data collection site at the University of British Columbia](#) will open in the fall of 2013.

Recruitment and the main wave of baseline data collection for these 30,000 participants will continue until 2015 and, upon completion, the data and samples will be prepared for access by approved researchers.

Enabling Units

The [Biorepository and Bioanalysis Centre \(BBC\)](#) is the CLSA's storage and principal analysis location for the biospecimens collected at the CLSA data collection sites. The BBC houses a research laboratory dedicated to sample analysis to explore and answer a variety of research questions. In September 2013, a robotic system was operationalized. The Freedom EVO® is a customized workstation, designed to handle requests from researchers accessing the CLSA biospecimens to perform multiplex biomarker assays for efficient use of the specimens and provide test results of high quality. By November 2013 the biorepository will have filled three cryofreezers with nearly 500,000 blood and urine samples for future research.

While awaiting biospecimens for analysis, the [Genetics and Epigenetics Centre \(GEC\)](#) continues to develop its operating procedures that will form the foundation for the implementation of the GE aspects of the CLSA. In preparation for receiving the large amount of future samples, the GEC has been validating and optimizing the experimental protocols and procedures for the specialized machines that have been acquired. These include a MassArray analyzer, a MesoScale Sector Imager 2400, and PyroMark. The GEC is establishing a facility with some of the best available technology for high-throughput genomics and epigenomics, which will allow it to best address the needs of the CLSA.

The [Statistical Analysis Centre \(SAC\)](#) is responsible for ensuring the quality of the alphanumeric information collected in the CLSA and for providing the methods for access to data to approved researchers. The specific responsibilities of the SAC are to: examine the data collected for accuracy; create key derived variables required for analysis; conduct analyses for internal CLSA studies and for quality control; prepare subsets of data for dissemination to the scientific community, while respecting strict security and confidentiality standards; and develop a web portal providing comprehensive information on the CLSA. This web portal will be launched in 2014, and will provide approved users access to CLSA data and related collection procedures. The SAC is in the process of preparing the first wave of data for release on the portal, which will include information collected during telephone interviews with 20,000 CLSA participants across the country.

Team News



Dr. Marc Poulin

Marc Poulin has joined the CLSA as Calgary co-lead site investigator. He is a professor in the Departments of Physiology and Pharmacology and Clinical Neurosciences at the University of Calgary. He holds the Brenda Strafford Foundation Chair in Alzheimer Research.



Dr. Teresa Liu-Ambrose

Teresa Liu-Ambrose has joined the CLSA as Vancouver co-lead site investigator. She is an associate professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of British Columbia and holds the Canada Research Chair in Physical Activity, Mobility, and Cognitive Neuroscience.



Dr. Scott Lear

Scott Lear has joined the CLSA as Surrey co-lead site investigator. He is a professor in the Department of Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology at Simon Fraser University. He holds the Pfizer/Heart and Stroke Foundation Chair in Cardiovascular Prevention research at St. Paul's Hospital.



Dr. Phil St. John

Phil St. John has joined the CLSA as Winnipeg co-lead site investigator. He is the University Division Director of Geriatric Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. He also sits on the advisory board of the University of Manitoba's Centre on Aging.

CIHR Café Scientifique

In early 2013, the CLSA hosted three CIHR Café Scientifiques for the public to learn about the latest research in aging. These events were funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), with partner funding from the host institutions, and provided a forum for members of the public to interact with health researchers.



Montreal



Victoria



Hamilton

I'm not afraid of aging . . . But let's talk

Experts:

- » Bryna Shatenstein, Department of Nutrition, Université de Montréal
- » Mark Yaffe, Department of Family Medicine, McGill University
- » Russell Hepple, McGill Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health
- » Christina Wolfson, CLSA

The New Science of Everyday Living for Aging Well

Experts:

- » This event provided the audience the opportunity to hear from Debra Sheets, an associate professor of nursing and co-lead site investigator of the CLSA at the University of Victoria.

Use it or Lose it: Secrets of a healthy brain

Experts:

- » Allison Sekuler, Department of Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour, McMaster University
- » Kathy Pichora-Fuller, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto
- » Christopher Patterson, Department of Medicine, McMaster University
- » Parminder Raina, CLSA

Recruitment: By the Numbers

As of October 4, 2013



CLSA Methods

Maintaining Contact Questionnaire

In Summer 2013, the CLSA implemented the Maintaining Contact Questionnaire (MCQ). The MCQ 35-minute telephone interview takes place midway between each three-year data collection wave. In addition to the goal of maintaining contact, the brief mid-wave questionnaire permits the collection of a limited amount of additional questionnaire data. The CLSA research team is also investigating alternative methods of implementing the MCQ and is conducting a pilot of an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) MCQ and evaluating the possibility of developing a web-based version.

Data Access

An underlying principle of the CLSA is that the data gathered be made available to the research community as soon as it is feasible while protecting privacy and confidentiality of participants. The [CLSA Data Access Policy](#) and the [CLSA Data and/or Biospecimen Request Application](#) are now available on the CLSA website. To access [CLSA questionnaires](#) and the [study protocol](#), researchers must register.

For questions about data access, please contact the Statistical Analysis Centre: dsac@clsa-elcv.ca.

News & Events

Presentations & Public Events

The CLSA and CIHR are co-hosting "[Living Longer, Living Better: Is there a secret to longevity?](#)" a CIHR Café Scientifique. The event will take place in Halifax at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 from 6-8 p.m. on October 16, 2013.

The Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG) is holding its 42nd Annual Scientific and Education Meeting, [Aging . . . From Cells to Society](#), in Halifax from Oct. 17-19, 2013. Susan Kirkland and Lauren Griffith will be presenting on the CLSA's achievements to date and how the CLSA's proxy process addresses the issue of continuing study participation in the face of cognitive decline.

Recent CLSA Publications

Oremus M, Postuma R, Griffith L, Balion C, Wolfson C, Kirkland S, Patterson C, Shannon HS; CLSA Algorithms Validation Group, Raina P. [Validating Chronic Disease Ascertainment Algorithms for Use in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging](#). *Canadian Journal on Aging*. 2013 Sep;32(3):232-9.

Visit the CLSA website for the latest [scientific publications](#) and [presentations](#).

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