



Reducing health
inequities
through
innovative
research that
supports social
change.

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON
INNER CITY HEALTH
IMPACT REPORT: 2009 - 2010

St. Michael's
Inspired Care. Inspiring Science.

CRICH AT A GLANCE

2009/2010

18 CORE SCIENTISTS.

9 DOCTORAL AND POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS.

120 RESEARCH COORDINATORS, ASSISTANTS, ASSOCIATES, AND TECHNICIANS.

PUBLICATIONS:

121 | **86** JOURNAL ARTICLES, INCLUDING **10** SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS.
35 BOOKS, BOOK CHAPTERS, AND REPORTS.

RESEARCH STUDIES UNDERWAY:

59

PRESENTATIONS TO DECISION-MAKER ORGANIZATIONS:

104

VISITS TO WWW.CRICH.CA:

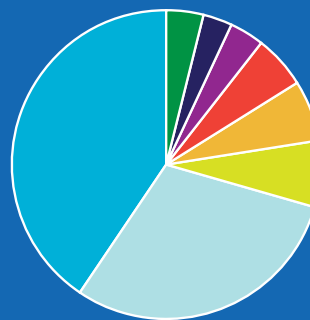
12,130 | A **43%** INCREASE SINCE 2008/2009.

CRICH RESEARCH REPORTS OR FACT SHEETS WERE DOWNLOADED **1,750** TIMES.

OUR 2009/2010 RESEARCH GRANT FUNDERS

BMO Financial Group • Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation • Canadian Cancer Society • Canadian Institute for Advanced Research • Canadian Institutes of Health Research • Canadian Observational Cohort • Cancer Care Ontario • Centre for Urban Health Initiatives, University of Toronto • City of Toronto • International Development Research Centre • John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation • Mental Health Commission of Canada • Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care • National Institutes of Health • Ontario HIV Treatment Network • Ontario Institute for Cancer Research • Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre • Peterborough KM Hunter Charitable Foundation • Public Health Agency of Canada • Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council • St. Michael's • Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network • Toronto Community Foundation • University of Toronto Dean's Fund • Workplace Safety and Insurance Board • World Health Organization

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DR. PATRICIA O'CAMPO

Director

Centre for Research on Inner City Health

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

At CRICH, our mission is to reduce health inequities through innovative research that supports social change.

“Supporting” social change; what does that mean? **For us, it means producing high-quality evidence to guide the development of programs and policies that can really make a difference in improving health outcomes for inner city populations.** Great promise lies in complex population health interventions that address the underlying social and economic factors that affect our health – factors like access to suitable housing, nutritious food, health and social services, safe recreation, and supportive social networks. **And generating and evaluating these kinds of intersectoral solutions is where CRICH truly shines.**

Our focus on responding to complex, “inner city” health problems like homelessness, newcomer isolation, severe mental health problems, and substance use problems is what attracts researchers and community collaborators to our centre. **It's also drawing outstanding candidates from around the world to our new, CIHR-funded post-doctoral training program, “The ACHIEVE Research Partnership: Action for Health Equity Research”.** The goal of ACHIEVE is to equip new researchers with skills and aptitudes that are generally unavailable through traditional graduate education, yet necessary for bridging the gap between *measuring* health inequities and actively participating in *reducing* them.

2009/2010 has been a very exciting year. In the following pages, you'll find examples of how our research had an impact this year, and profiles of a few large projects we launched in 2009/2010. **Of particular excitement is the national “At Home/Chez Soi” Research Demonstration Project in Mental Health and Homelessness, funded by the Mental Health Commission of Canada.** CRICH is the Toronto lead on this project – please see the following page for more details.

2009 also marked the launch of the CRICH Survey Research Unit (SRU). The SRU will allow us to consolidate – and share – CRICH's considerable capability and expertise in interviewing large numbers of people, including hard-to-reach or hard-to-follow populations. We'll launch the SRU web site soon; check www.crich.ca for updates. **At the CRICH site, you can also find information on the issues we study, past and current projects, our scientists, and our ACHIEVE training program.**

With our people, our work, and our partners – and a move to the new Keenan Research Centre at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute facility in 2011 – the coming year is looking sensational. I look forward to sharing it with you.

Sincerely,

Pat

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS 2009/2010



BETTER HEALTH CARE AT ONTARIO'S LARGEST HOMELESS SHELTER

In 2007-08, CRICH Researcher **Dr. Vicky Stergiopoulos** and her team conducted a client needs assessment at Toronto's

Seaton House emergency shelter. The report showed that 80% of Seaton House clients experience severe to moderate disabilities – a level of need that the shelter was never designed to address. Evidence from the CRICH report was tabled by the City of Toronto Housing Opportunities Action Plan for Affordable Housing, in its proposal to demolish and rebuild Seaton House. In late 2009, Toronto City Council approved the plan. The new Seaton House will offer enhanced services to address the specific needs identified in the CRICH report, including long-term care, infirmary and health care beds, supportive housing, and expanded programming space.

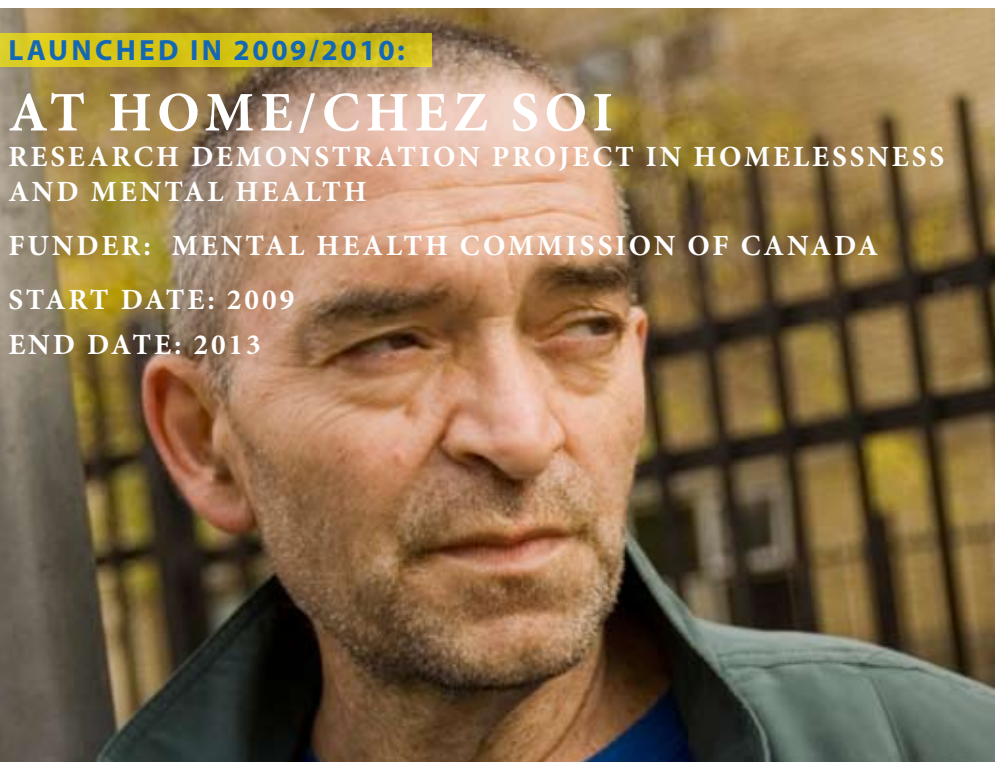
LAUNCHED IN 2009/2010:

AT HOME/CHEZ SOI RESEARCH DEMONSTRATION PROJECT IN HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

FUNDER: MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA

START DATE: 2009

END DATE: 2013



On any given night, there are between 5,000 and 6,500 homeless people in Toronto. Between 1/4 and 1/3 of homeless people have a serious mental health problem like schizophrenia, major depressive disorder, or bipolar affective disorder.

"At Home/Chez Soi" is a national research project to find the best ways to provide housing and services to people who face mental health problems and homelessness. A total of 2,285 people will participate across Canada in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, and Moncton. About half of participants will be provided with an apartment plus specialized support services, following the "Housing First" philosophy. About half will use existing services available in their cities.

The study will generate evidence about client outcomes. It will also ask whether it costs less to provide homeless people with real housing and services, compared to having people stay in hospitals, prisons, and shelters.

CRICH Researchers **Dr. Stephen Hwang** and **Dr. Vicky Stergiopoulos**, and CRICH Director **Dr. Patricia O'Campo** are the lead researchers on the project's Toronto arm, where 560 individuals will participate. For more information, visit www.mentalhealthcommission.ca.



EQUIPPING MOHLTC TO RESPOND TO EQUITY IMPLICATIONS OF NEW PHYSICIAN REIMBURSEMENT MODELS

In the past 10 years, Ontario has undergone one of the world's

largest short-term voluntary shifts in physician reimbursement, from fee-for-service models to "capitation" models (in which physicians are paid a fixed fee for each patient in their roster). However, there is little evidence on how capitation models affect patient outcomes or equity of access to health care. In 2009, CRICH Researcher and family physician **Dr. Rick Glazier** conducted a study that found that patients in capitation practices are healthier and wealthier than expected – important findings, in light of Ontario's efforts to expand use of primary care services and to ensure equitable access to services. In early 2010, based on these findings and Dr. Glazier's subsequent recommendations, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Physician Services Committee requested that Dr. Glazier take next steps and investigate adjusting capitation payments based on patients' needs. His work is now part of the current MOHLTC-Ontario Medical Association agreement.



FORECASTING GLOBAL SPREAD OF DISEASE: A TOOL TO PREPARE CANADA FOR PANDEMICS

Evidence is needed prepare for and respond to emerging

infectious diseases in a targeted, strategic way. In response to the SARS crisis in 2003, CRICH Researcher **Dr. Kamran Khan** (in collaboration with Ryerson University, the University of Manitoba, and the world's largest commercial airport and air transport organizations) developed Bio.Diaspora – a secure and remotely accessible web-based technology that can rapidly analyze global air traffic patterns to predict the geographic spread of emerging infectious diseases. In 2009, Dr. Khan used Bio.Diaspora to report to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) on what Canada can do to better prepare and respond to disease outbreaks. Later that year, Dr. Khan used Bio.Diaspora to analyze more than 2.3 million flight itineraries and accurately predict how the H1N1 virus would spread out of Mexico to cities around the world. During the pandemic, his results were requested by and provided to the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, and PHAC. Bio.Diaspora has also generated significant interest and collaboration among the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US Department of Defense, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, and the World Health Organization. Learn more at www.biodiaspora.com.



PUT TO THE TEST: EVALUATING ONTARIO'S GUIDELINES FOR HIV TESTING AND COUNSELLING

30-40% of people who are HIV positive don't know their status.

This year, CRICH Director **Dr. Patricia O'Campo** and other CRICH researchers completed a 2-year collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) AIDS Bureau, Ontario HIV test practitioners, and the Ontario Central Public Health Laboratory to evaluate HIV testing and counselling activities across Ontario. We found that Ontario providers are following guidelines and clients are highly satisfied with the services they receive. However, we also identified some important areas of concern; for example, stigma around HIV continues to be a major barrier to reaching high-risk populations. The study confirmed that men who have sex with men, injection drug users, and people born in HIV endemic countries are at highest risk in Ontario and would benefit the most from targeted programs to improve testing rates. This study was performed at the request of the MOHLTC, and funded by the MOHLTC Applied Health Research Program.

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CRICH RESEARCHER DR. JIM DUNN RECEIVES MACARTHUR FOUNDATION AWARD

In 2009, CRICH Researcher **Dr. Jim Dunn** was awarded a \$738,000 grant from the Chicago-based John D. and

Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for a CRICH study on the mental health effects of the Regent Park social housing redevelopment in Toronto. He is the first ever non-US recipient of a housing research grant from the Foundation, awarded as part of their "How Housing Matters to Families and Communities" program. Built more than 50 years ago, Regent Park is Canada's oldest and largest concentrated public housing community. Over the next 15 years, Regent Park will be demolished and rebuilt to include new community, recreational, and cultural services. CRICH is looking at how the neighbourhood's revitalization will affect things like residents' sense of community and safety, child development, and interactions across social groups. The first of its kind in Canada and one of the first in the world, this study will provide an important evidence base for social housing redevelopments and urban planning across Canada.

LAUNCHED IN 2009/2010:

PROJECT NEHW

NEIGHBOURHOOD EFFECTS ON HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

FUNDERS: CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH;
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH
COUNCIL; CENTRE FOR URBAN HEALTH
INITIATIVES, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

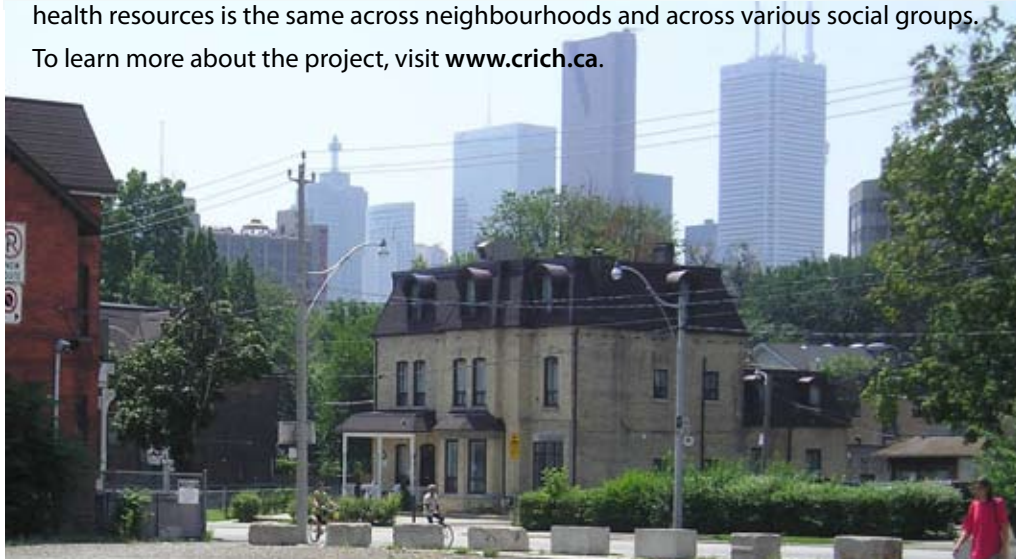
START DATE: 2009

END DATE: 2013

It is estimated that at least one in five Canadian adults have a mental illness. A large body of literature has shown that the physical, psychological, social, and spatial characteristics of urban neighbourhoods can affect our physical and mental health. Little of this research, however, has been conducted in Canada – evidence is needed to inform Canadian, neighbourhood-level programs and services aimed to improve mental health and well-being.

For "Project NEHW", CRICH's new **Survey Research Unit** is interviewing 3000 Torontonians across 100 random Toronto neighbourhoods to help CRICH Director **Dr. Patricia O'Campo** identify neighbourhood factors that promote – or diminish – mental health. We're also investigating why some people choose to access mental health resources close to their neighbourhoods, while others do not, and whether the use of mental health resources is the same across neighbourhoods and across various social groups.

To learn more about the project, visit www.crich.ca.



LAUNCHED IN 2009/2010:

OUR HEALTH COUNTS

FUNDER: ONTARIO MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE

START DATE: 2009

END DATE: 2013



Basic public health data for Ontario's urban Aboriginal population are almost non-existent, despite the fact that over 70% of Ontario's Aboriginal Peoples live in urban centres. We need these data to inform the development of effective and culturally appropriate health programs and policies for Aboriginal individuals, families, communities, and Nations.

The goal of "Our Health Counts" is to improve Aboriginal health data in Ontario. For this study, CRICH Researcher **Dr. Janet Smylie** is working in partnership with the Métis Nation of Ontario, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women's Association, and Tungasuvvingat Inuit. The team will identify the health indicators that are relevant to Canada's urban Aboriginal Peoples, and collect much-needed health data using community-inclusive methods.

To learn more about the project, visit www.crich.ca.



WOULD SUPERVISING DRUG USE HELP IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR INJECTION DRUG USERS IN ONTARIO?

A supervised consumption site (SCS) is a legally-sanctioned facility in which injection drug users (IDUs) can take pre-obtained drugs in a hygienic environment, under the

supervision of trained staff. Evidence shows that IDUs who use SCSs are less likely to overdose, less likely to engage in risky behaviour (like needle sharing), and more likely to access to other services. However, evidence is needed on whether these sites are cost-effective, and whether they will be as effective in Ontario as they have been in other provinces. To answer these questions, CRICH Researcher **Dr. Ahmed Bayoumi** and CRICH Associate Scientist **Dr. Carol Strike** are leading the Toronto and Ottawa Supervised Consumption Assessment (TOSCA). Focus groups with drug users and key informants began in 2009. Our findings will have direct relevance for IDUs, their advocates, and decision-makers in Ontario.

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