

# GLOBAL AGING E-BRIEF

Newsletter from the Global Aging Community Initiative



## Global Aging and Community Initiative Update:

### GACI Director Honoured with MSVU's Award for Research Excellence

Dr. Zachary Zimmer has been named the 2022 winner of the university's Research Excellence Award. He received the award during spring convocation celebrations. The annual award recognizes contribution to the research community and to the research climate at MSVU. The award also serves to showcase the high level of scholarly research at the university.

Dr. Zimmer's program of research is interdisciplinary and lies at the intersection of Demography, Sociology and Gerontology. His research is globally oriented and generally focuses on a variety of aspects of health and other indicators of well-being among older people worldwide.

Throughout his long and distinguished research career, Dr. Zimmer has been a highly productive and well-funded scholar with well over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles as well as 15 book chapters in edited volumes and over \$10 million in research funding for his research program. It is not surprising that Dr. Zimmer has more than 6,000 citations of this work.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition, Dr. Zimmer!



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The GACI is coordinating the 33rdREVES conference (Sept 21-23, 2022), which will take place at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. REVES is an international organization that promotes the use of health expectancy as a population health indicator. This is the first-time conference participants will have travelled to the East Coast of Canada. In conjunction with the conference a two-day training workshop on health expectancy methods, geared for early-career scholars is scheduled for Sept 19-20. Sixty to eighty international academic are expected to attend the conference. More information can be found at <https://www.reveshalifax2022.com/>



# Collaborator Profile:

## Dr. Deborah Norris

**There's a lot of data to sift through when analyzing quantitative research but at the core understanding the qualitative aspect often gets to the heart of the study.**

That's exactly what Dr. Deborah Norris, Professor & Graduate Coordinator, Department of Family Studies and Gerontology at Mount Saint Vincent University, discovered when she started her career in family studies, critical theory, and qualitative methodology.

Dr. Norris' formative experience working at CFB Halifax was instrumental in developing her ongoing interest in exploring the challenges and opportunities faced by this population. Her research focuses on the military family. Within this area of study, she works on a wide range of specific topics such as focusing on the everyday lives of female military partners experiencing the cycle of deployment, secondary trauma in military families, work-life balance in families where mothers are serving members in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), the impact of operational stress injuries on the mental health and well-being of families of veterans, resilience and post-traumatic growth in military families, and the military to civilian transition. Recently, she expanded the scope and focus of her research program to include families of public safety personnel through participation in the "Families Matter Research Group", a collaboration with national and international colleagues.

Dr. Norris is currently working with GACI on the CIHR-funded research project, "The Long-Term Effects of War on Biological Aging: The Case of Vietnam." Under her guidance research staff from Hanoi Medical University in Vietnam will be trained on how to conduct qualitative interviews to gather information that will augment the continued research into the affects of the American wars on the Vietnamese population, including former soldiers and their families.

**"Facilitating military partner programs and parent education programs early in my career at the first Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) at CFB Halifax sparked my interest in military families," says Deborah, when asked why she delved into military family research. "Talking to people prompted me to want to know more about their lives and to showcase their significance to the military institution."**

**-Dr. Deborah Norris-**



# Project Update: Chronic Pain is a Global Health Concern

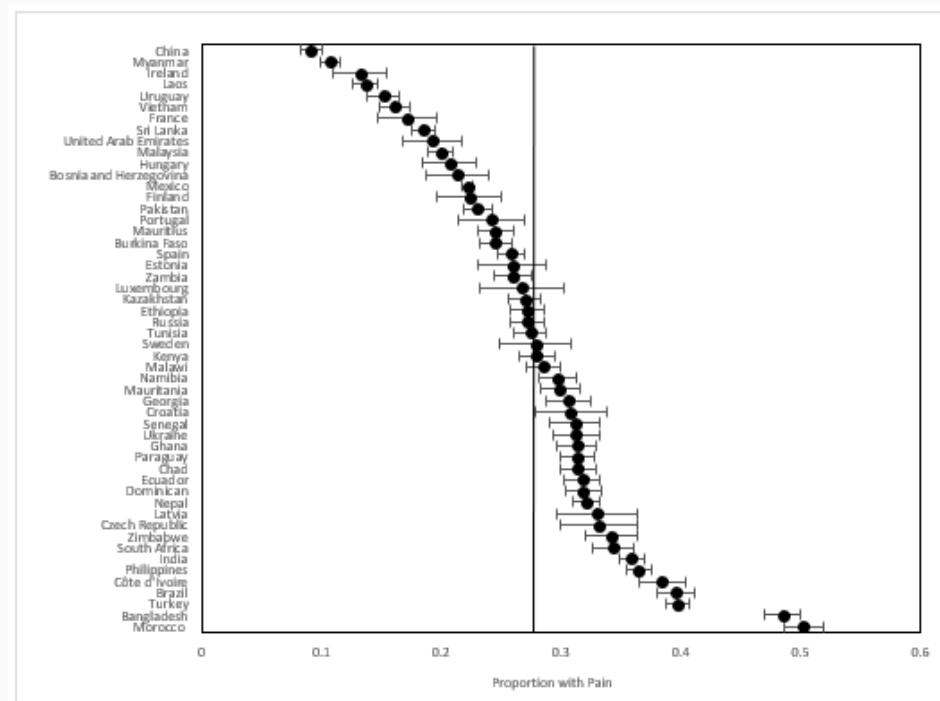
Around the world billions are affected by pain daily. Pain is a leading cause of disability. The WHO reports pain to be among the most common health problems experienced by people around the world. The Global Burden of Disease recognizes specific types of pain, like low-back pain, to be among the most prevalent conditions in the world. Pain is the single most frequent reason for doctor visits and results in billions of dollars lost in productivity. There is ample reason therefore to consider chronic pain a globally relevant health challenge for older people and for those of all ages. GACI is collaborating in a project that is conducting a deep investigative dive into the 'Global Demography of Pain'. The aims revolve around using demographic data, methods, and theories to investigate high-priority questions about chronic pain's prevalence, distribution, long-term trends, precursors, and consequences around the world.

GACI collaboration resulted in a paper entitled, "A global study of pain prevalence across 52 countries: examining the role of country-level contextual factors," recently released online in the journal *Pain®*. The study compares the prevalence of unspecified pain in adults aged 25 and older across 52 countries using data from the World Health Survey. A key finding is found in the graph shown on this page, which presents prevalence across countries, with 95% confidence intervals. The results display a wide range in prevalence. China has the lowest proportion with pain at about 10% and Morocco the highest at about 50%.

The Global Aging and Community Initiative (GACI) is a research organization at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU), located within the Nova Scotia Center on Aging. It is directed by Dr. Zachary Zimmer, a Tier I Canada Research Chair and Professor of Family Studies and Gerontology. The GACI aims to create knowledge on issues related to the quality of life of older persons worldwide through collaborative research across a broad global scientific community. GACI is currently working on a number of research projects focusing on the health and well-being of older persons in different areas around the world. We currently list 26 collaborators from nine countries.

Going on to explain these variations, the paper uses multilevel logistic regressions that incorporate country-level factors. It finds income inequality, gender inequality, population density, life expectancy and global region within which a country is situated are factors that impact on country-level pain prevalence. Even when accounting for these variables, variation in pain prevalence remains, suggesting a complex interaction between personal, local, economic, and political impacts, as well as inherent differences in language, interpretations of health, and other difficult to assess cultural idiosyncrasies.

Please follow the following link to see a video abstract of this paper:  
<http://links.lww.com/PAIN/B552>



This graph presents the age- and sex-standardized proportion of people in 52 countries that report having pain, with 95% confidence intervals. The vertical line represents the cross-country average. The graph indicates wide variation in pain around the world, with prevalence ranging from as low as 10% to as high as 50%. This comes from Figure 1 of Z. Zimmer, K. Fraser, H. Grol-Prokopczyk, & A. Zajacova, 2022, "A global study of pain prevalence across 52 countries: examining the role of country-level contextual factors," *PAIN*, [https://journals.lww.com/pain/Abstract/9000/A\\_global\\_study\\_of\\_pain\\_prevalence\\_across\\_52.97820.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/pain/Abstract/9000/A_global_study_of_pain_prevalence_across_52.97820.aspx)

# SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- "Older Adults' Loneliness and Social Relationships in the Philippines: Comparison between Rural and Urban Contexts," Emiko Takagi, Yasuhiko Saito, Grace T. Cruz, Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health, forthcoming.
- "Is there compression or expansion of morbidity in the Philippines?" Grace T. Cruz, Christian Joy P. Cruz and Yasuhiko Saito, Geriatrics & Gerontology, forthcoming.
- "Changes in Health Expectancy for Older Adults in Japan: Results from Two Longitudinal Surveys," Yuka Minagawa and Yasuhiko Saito, Gerontology, forthcoming.
- "Factors associated with high rates of depressive symptomatology in older people in Vietnam," Nguyen, T., Tran, K., Vu C. N., Dong, T. L., Saito, Y. et al., American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, forthcoming.
- Bennett HQ, Kingston A, Lourida I, Robinson L, Corner L, Brayne C, Matthews FE, Jagger C; Cognitive Function and Ageing Studies Collaboration. A comparison over 2 decades of disability-free life expectancy at age 65 years for those with long-term conditions in England: Analysis of the 2 longitudinal Cognitive Function and Ageing Studies. PLoS Med. 2022 Mar 15;19(3):e1003936. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1003936. PMID: 35290368; PMCID: PMC8923437.
- Kingston A, Wittenberg R, Hu B, Jagger C. Projections of dependency and associated social care expenditure for the older population in England to 2038: effect of varying disability progression. Age and Ageing 2022 (in press).
- Norris, D., Smith-Evans, K., Cramm, H., & Tam-Seto, L. (in-press). A post-traumatic growth perspective on PTSD: The case of military veterans and their partners. Military Behavioral Health.
- Baluk, K., Norris, D., Schwartz, K.D. Whelan, J., & Cramm, H. (in-press). Exploring family resiliency within Canadian Armed Forces Veteran families during the military to civilian transition. Journal of Military and Veteran Health.
- Leroux, J., Richmond, R., Kirkland, H., Fitzpatrick, S., Norris, D., Mahar, A., MacDermid, J., Dekel R., & Cramm H. (2021). Experiences of families of public safety personnel: A systematic review protocol of qualitative evidence. Systematic Reviews, 10, 258. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-021-01807-1>
- Cramm, H., Norris, D., Fear, N.T., & Dekel, R (2021). Military families and military-to-civilian transition: The current state of play. BMJ Military Health. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjmilitary-2021-001815>.
- Cramm, H., Dekel, R., Norris, D., Fear, N.T. (2021). Travelling towards transition - Considerations for the military family. Journal of Military & Veteran Health. 29(4), pp. 77-79.
- Zachary Zimmer, Benjamas Penboon and Aree Jampaklay. Location and provision of support from migrants to left-behind parents in rural Cambodia. Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology. Published virtually January 15, 2022. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10823-021-09447-7>.
- Chen, Vivian Yi-Ju, Kiwoong Park, Feinuo Sun, and Tse-Chuan Yang. In press. "Assessing COVID-19 risk with temporal indices and geographically weighted ordinal logistic regression in US counties." PLoS ONE 17(4): e0265673. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0265673
- Sun, Feinuo. 2022. "Rurality and opioid prescribing rates in U.S. counties from 2006 to 2018: A spatiotemporal investigation." Social Science & Medicine 296: 114788. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.114788

The GACI staff consist of (l-r) Dr. Zachary Zimmer, Director, GACI, Renee Field, Research Program Manager, Dr. Feinuo Sun, Post-doctoral Fellow and Sara Hamm, Research Assistant.

