

## **P16 - TRANSITIONING STUDENTS INTO THE FIELD OF AGING – INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL INTERNSHIPS TO FOSTER INTERPROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS**

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**Brief Description of Research or Project:** The Baycrest Centre for Learning, Research and Innovation (LRI) in Long Term Care recently completed the second round of its interprofessional summer internship program to attract students in health disciplines into careers in gerontology and aging. Through the internship, students were encouraged to explore career opportunities and to develop relationships and establish networks to support and promote their interest in the field of aging. Undergraduate students from kinesiology, pharmacy, medicine, nursing, nutrition, psychology, life sciences and health studies took part. Interns explored the field through small group learning with clinical and administrative experts, job shadowing and arts-based learning; building relationships with residents, clinical teams and program evaluation mentors; and, networking with peers, staff and program partner organizations. This session will highlight internship successes during and following the internship program as students became involved in a network that fosters opportunities for employment, education, continued partnerships and presentations and an appreciation for interprofessional approaches to seniors' care. These important outcomes demonstrate the potential benefits of this type of programming which can serve as a model for other long-term care homes across the province. **Why is this research important to profile at the Research Day 2014?** Currently, Canada's seniors account for nearly 15% of the population and this number is expected to increase with longer life expectancy. Given this trend, recruiting future generations of health care professionals in the field of aging is vital and needs to begin early in the career trajectory. To attract and engage future health care practitioners in long-term care, this innovative internship program was designed to provide undergraduate students in health disciplines with varied learning opportunities while contributing to organizational initiatives and projects. The unique structure of the program enables interns to engage with students in other disciplines, diverse clinicians, administrators and researchers as well as with residents, in order to learn with and from each other and to foster an appreciation for interprofessional approaches to seniors' care. Although only two summer internships have been completed so far, many surprising successes, both during and following the internship have unfolded, as intern alumni have become involved in networks and established relationships that continue to nurture their interest and opportunities for career development in the field of aging. This internship model can be adapted and replicated by other long-term care homes to help support the needs of a growing senior

population. Statistics Canada. (2012). Analytical document: The Canadian population in 2011: Age and Sex. (Catalogue No. 98-311-X2011001). Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-311-x/98-311-x2011001-eng.pdf>