

# Research Report Round-up

February 26, 2014

A research report summary

## Title and Link to Report

[Older Adults and Addictions in Ontario: Results from a Provincial Survey of Community Mental Health Agencies](#)

## Author(s)

The Addictions Subgroup of the Community of Practice for Mental Health, Addictions and Behavioural Issues – SHRTN / AKE / ORC Learning Collaborative: Elizabeth Birchall, Community Outreach Programs in Addictions (COPA); Julia Baxter, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton – Halton Geriatric Mental Health and Addiction Outreach & Halton ADAPT; Jan Haycock, Sister Margaret Smith Centre, St. Joseph's Care Group; Dallas Smith, Lifestyle Enrichment for Senior Adults (LESA) Centretown Community Health Centre; Carolyn Thompson, Peel Addiction Assessment and Referral Centre (PAARC); Bonnie Franklin, Hamilton Public Health Services, Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Services, Older Wiser Lifestyles (OWL); Robin Hurst, Seniors & Mental Health, Saint Elizabeth Health Care; Sarah Clark, Knowledge Broker, Alzheimer's Knowledge Exchange (AKE)

## Year

2013

## Location

Toronto

## What this report is about

There is unprecedented growth in the number and proportion of the elderly in Canada. In 2011, the census data showed 5 million older adults, which translates to 14.8% of the population. In 2036 there will likely be 9.8 million seniors, representing 24.5% of population.

As a result, many older adults are now accessing addiction treatment services in mainstream addiction agencies. This subpopulation with addictions and complex care needs often requires specialized services. But do service agencies have the capacity to meet the demand?

In 2010, the Seniors Health Research Transfer Network/Alzheimer's Knowledge Exchange/Ontario Research Coalition Community of Practice created a subgroup to look at geriatric addictions. The group developed a survey to see what kind of support other agencies require in order to increase capacity to work with complex older adults accessing addiction treatment. 163 surveys were disseminated to agencies outside of the geriatric and addictions sector in Ontario. There was an outstanding 96% response rate. The report outlines the findings including geriatric and non-geriatric screening tools being used, training needs identified, common interventions/services, and referral utilization.

# Research Report Round-up



Page 2

## How can this report be used

This report can be used to plan for services and capacity building in the specialized geriatric addictions and mental health sector. Also, the intervention, referral, and consultation patterns identified in this survey have the potential to identify best practices. It has already been used as a basis for the knowledge exchange plan for the Specialized Geriatric Addiction Services (SGAS) Community of Interest funded through EENet. The SGAS CoI used the educational needs identified through the survey report to establish a partnership with the Opioid Awareness Treatment and Education Initiative to bring opioid training to Ontario's northern service agencies.

## Type of study

A provincial survey of community mental health agencies

## Population addressed

Agencies providing specialized geriatric addiction services

## Key words

Older adults, addictions, community mental health agencies

## Contact person/source

Elizabeth Birchall, MSW, RSW  
Executive Director  
Community Outreach Programs in Addictions (COPA)  
Ste 200, 49 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON, M5V 2P2  
(T) 416-516-2982 x224  
(C) 416-995-9646  
[director@copacommunity.ca](mailto:director@copacommunity.ca)  
[copacommunity.ca](http://copacommunity.ca)  
[eenet.ca/the-specialized-geriatric-addiction-services-community-of-interest](http://eenet.ca/the-specialized-geriatric-addiction-services-community-of-interest)

## Language

English



Evidence Exchange Network  
for Mental Health and Addictions

Evidence Exchange Network (EENet; formerly OMHAKEN) actively promotes the use of research evidence in decision-making by providing an infrastructure to connect research and researchers to mental health and addictions research stakeholders across Ontario, develops targeted KT products and tools, and supports interactive exchanges. The EENet Management and Resource Centre is located in the Provincial System Support Program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).