



Canadian Nurses Foundation  
La Fondation des infirmières et infirmiers du Canada



Parkinson Society Canada  
Société Parkinson Canada

Société Alzheimer Society  
CANADA



CIHR IRSC  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada  
IA IV  
Institute of Aging / Institut du vieillissement

**Care Practice in Cognitive Impairment in Aging Grant  
In Partnership with Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Aging,  
Canadian Nurses Foundation & Alzheimer Society Canada**

**Funding for these awards has been provided by Parkinson Society Canada, Institute of Aging & the Canadian Nurses Foundation**

**Dr. Janice KEEFE  
Mount Saint Vincent University**

**Year 1: \$87,831  
Year 2: \$79,041**

Title: Does timing of caregiver assessment make a difference: evaluating the impact with older spousal caregivers of persons with cognitive impairment

The ultimate goal of this research is to improve the lives of caregivers of people with cognitive impairment. It will do so by advancing work on the important role of caregivers in the health care system by better understanding the impacts of caregiver assessment experienced by both the caregiver (of someone with cognitive impairment), and the nurse trainee who conducts the assessment. Older spousal caregivers are the focus of this research because it is expected that their numbers will increase over the coming years, and because of the unique risks they face. A thorough understanding of older spousal caregivers and their situations, needs, expectations, and experiences is needed so that health care practitioners can provide appropriate information, resources and services and this can be accomplished in a timely way through appropriate psycho-social assessment. Caregiver assessment provides an opportunity for caregivers to share their stories, and have their roles recognized by health care practitioners. At the same time, assessment, when provided by health care professionals, such as nurses, can help them provide effective and timely support to the caregiver. The researchers have already established the value of assessing the needs of caregivers, but the question of when an assessment might be most beneficial to both the caregiver and the health care practitioner has not yet been addressed. The proposed project will attempt to explore whether and how the timing of assessment (i.e., caregivers of persons with on mild, moderate, severe levels of cognitive impairment) affects the benefits of assessment experienced by caregivers.

During the project, nursing students will be trained to use the C.A.R.E. Tool to assess caregivers of persons with cognitive impairment at different stages of impairment. The researchers will study the impact of this tool on caregivers and its effects on the nurses' knowledge and attitude toward caregivers. The researchers have consulted a number of advisors from a variety of backgrounds to help them develop the research strategy, and to determine the best ways of using the results of the research to benefit persons with cognitive impairment and their caregivers. Also, as a result of the research, health care practitioners will have a better understanding of the benefits of caregiver assessment, will know when assessment would be most beneficial to the caregiver, and ultimately, will have a greater understanding of the needs and realities of older, caregiving spouses.

**Dr. Belinda PARKE**  
**University of Alberta**

**Year 1: \$33,803.56**  
**Year 2: \$40,089.06**

Title: Understanding emergency department care transitions for older adults with dementia

A visit to the emergency department is a very stressful and complicated experience. Sick patients often are required to wait an unknown amount of time for care, meet with numerous hospital staff, move frequently to various confusing locations, and undergo a variety of tests. In addition, individuals treating patients in the emergency department experience heavy work loads and time constraints. The emergency department experience can be particularly difficult and unsettling for older individuals with dementia who are more sensitive to illness, changing circumstances, and factors in the emergency department environment (e.g., chaotic, noisy atmosphere, constantly lit). Mental function plays a critical factor in emergency department safety because it affects the older persons' abilities to remember, follow directions, solve problems, perform independent self-care, and communicate. These circumstances can make visiting the emergency department a potentially negative, life-changing transition leading to reduced independence.

Research to date has shown there is a need to improve the care of older individuals with dementia in the emergency department. Little is known about what reduces risk or improves safe care in the emergency department. While several different types of caregivers are involved in providing care to patients in the emergency department, Registered Nurses provide the majority of patient care. Surprisingly, little is known about what supports or challenges Registered Nurses as they try to provide quality care for older individuals with decreased mental function. The objective of this study is to identify barriers and supports to safe quality care in the emergency department and elicit change in practice. We will interview community dwelling older adults with dementia, their family caregiver(s), Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners who are providing care in the emergency department. We will also use emergency department photographs in focus groups to understand safe transitional care. This approach will allow us to identify perceptions about what works well and does not work well; constitutes safe care; reduces patient health risk, fear and anxiety; and ultimately enhances patient health when visiting the emergency department. The results will fill a void in information as to what is best practice in the emergency department for older individuals with dementia. Findings will be translated into information sheets for older adults and their caregivers to increase their knowledge of how to have a safe and successful emergency department visit. Our findings will also be shared with nurses in the emergency department to support changes in practice that may positively impact the well being of older adults with dementia.