The Participatory Research Newsletter

This monthly newsletter aims to highlight the participatory research initiatives emerging from P*articipatory Research @ McGill* (PRAM), and *Community Information, Empowerment and Transparency* (CIET), as well as share new opportunities for projects, courses, funding, and more!

Note, the CIET-PRAM Newsletter is offered in the following languages:

Français | Español

A Month in Review

An ever busy team, below are a few updates from the CIET-PRAM network.

Monthly Meeting

EDI in research and grant proposals

The monthly CIET-PRAM meeting is an opportunity to share project updates, present research protocols, practice dissertations defences, and more.

This month, we welcomed Dr. Uzma Jamil, Senior Research Equity Advisor at McGill University, as our guest speaker. Dr. Jamil delivered a valuable presentation on integrating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles in research and grant proposals—an increasingly crucial element in applications. Her insights and expertise equipped us with essential tools to strengthen our proposals and enhance the impact of our work.

Project Updates

We're excited to share the latest developments from our ongoing projects! Here's a quick look at our recent progress.

Authentic participatory research with older adults for cognitive health (APROACH) pilot in Botswana

This CIHR-funded pilot in rural Botswana and Montréal tests the feasibility and acceptability of preventing cognitive decline by engaging older adults in authentic participation. After cognitive testing, older women and

men will work in small groups to address shared concerns, where appropriate using participatory visual and arts-based methods to enhance communication. After completing 12 sessions we will repeat the cognitive assessment. In Botswana, we recruited older adults when they went to the *kgotla* (community meeting place) or local post office to collect their old-age pension. The local CIET team determined eligibility before a baseline questionnaire and cognitive function assessment.

Exciting Collaborations for Teen Health

Our teen health service improvement project is moving forward in partnership with Drs. Yvonne Quan, Perry Adler, and Mark Karanofsky of the Teenage Health Unit at the Jewish General Hospital! We have collaborations with Westmount High School, Marymount Academy, and Lauren Hill Senior Secondary School in Montréal, QC.

The project engages directly with teenagers from these schools to explore their perspectives on mental and physical health services. The youth input will clarify their needs and identify ways to enhance accessibility and engagement with services of the Unit. Stay tuned for more updates as participatory research improves services for teens!

Self-care practices for maternal health in Bogotá, Colombia

Our colleagues at Universidad del Bosque recently convened with representatives from public hospitals in northern Bogotá to discuss findings from a study on self-care practices among women during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. Developed in collaboration with PRAM, the study identified a variety of self-care practices, including the use of medicinal plants, often recommended by older women, mothers, and mothers-in-law.

Self-care was common during pregnancy, rare during hospital births, and again common postpartum. Participants preferred not to discuss these practices with hospital staff. They emphasized the need for open conversations with doctors about self-care, without fear of stigma, and expressed a desire to engage in hospital-organized activities, to foster better relationships with their healthcare providers.

Hospital representatives, for their part, acknowledged they need to understand self-care and to improve communication about the services they offered. The study was a step toward integrating patient perspectives into healthcare practices.

You can find more PRAM projects here!

Highlighting COVID-19 Challenges in Nigeria

Dr Mona Ziba Ghadirian recently presented at the 9th Africa Nutrition Conference in Cape Coast, Ghana (7-11 October). There, she presented the findings from a participatory study examining the perceived impact of the COVID-19 pandemic among rural populations in Bauchi State, Nigeria. Using fuzzy cognitive mapping, community members identified hunger and food insecurity as primary challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, underscoring the need for targeted recovery strategies.

In addition, Mona led a series of seminars with two local organizations, Associates for Change and the Olinga Foundation, to explore ways to integrate participatory research methods into their educational interventions and research models. These sessions offered a collaborative space for emerging researchers to consider how participatory methods, like the River of Life, participatory docudrama-making, and cognitive mapping, can engage community members—including parents, teachers, and education officials—in overcoming barriers to education and health services for young children in Ghana, Liberia, and Uganda.

New Post-doctoral Student

Join us in welcoming Dr Hilah Silver, who will be completing her post-doctoral studies under the supervision of Dr Neil Andersson within the Family Medicine Department at McGill University.

We're pleased to announce that Hilah Silver, featured in our June 2024 newsletter after her successful dissertation defense, is continuing her research with the PRAM team under Dr. Neil Andersson.

Collaborating with Inuit stakeholders, Hilah co-designed culturally safe perinatal services for women undergoing maternal evacuations for childbirth, marking the first phase of a larger CIHR-funded initiative. Now, as a postdoctoral researcher, she will continue this impactful work.

Latest Publications

Highlighted below are some of the most recent publications from the industrious CIET-PRAM team:

Keeping birth at home: Community and service provider visions for perinatal wellness and continued Inuit childbirth in Nunavik

Authors: Hilah Silver, Elisapi Padlayat, Pasha Saviakjuk, Ivan Sarmiento, Richard Budgell, Anne Cockcroft, Zoua M. Vang & Neil Andersson

Visit our website for more publications from the CIET-PRAM team

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