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Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging
Étude longitudinale canadienne sur le vieillissement



Filomena Tassi (right), Member of Parliament for Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, and Cynthia Balion (left), co-principal investigator of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA), peer inside a cryofreezer at the CLSA Biorepository and Bioanalysis Centre in Hamilton, Ontario.

A Message from the CLSA Research Team

Over the last year and half, we have all been challenged by the impacts of the coronavirus. From physical distancing and social isolation to job uncertainty and travel restrictions, we have experienced unprecedented changes that have had

major impacts on many aspects of our lives.

For the CLSA, this has meant adapting how we do research. In April 2020, a month after the pandemic struck, we [launched the CLSA COVID-19 Questionnaire Study](#) to better understand the impacts of the pandemic on the health and well-being of older adults. We are grateful to the 28,000 CLSA participants who took part by phone or web survey. Select [findings](#) from the questionnaire study are summarized in this newsletter.

In fall 2020, the [CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study launched](#) following a \$4 million investment from the Government of Canada through the [COVID-19 Immunity Task Force](#). The study collected and is in the process of analyzing blood samples from more than 18,500 CLSA participants to investigate the presence of COVID-19 antibodies and other markers of immunity among older adults.

A third COVID-19 study was launched this summer to investigate the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on brain health. You can read more about the CLSA COVID-19 Brain Health Study [here](#).

To date, more than 350 CLSA research projects have been approved and researchers are using CLSA data to investigate a wide variety of topics related to health, aging and COVID-19. Research summaries are available under the [Approved Projects](#) section of our website.

We are grateful for continued support from the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research](#) and the [Canada Foundation for Innovation](#). In August, the Government of Canada [announced \\$61.5 million in funding](#) to renew the CLSA infrastructure and support data collection and the distribution of data to approved researchers until 2027.

None of this would be possible without our participants. Thanks to your contributions, the CLSA has established itself as a world-class research platform on health and aging, now with expanded capacity to enable COVID-19 research. We appreciate your ongoing commitment to the study, especially during this challenging time. In summer 2021, the CLSA [launched its next wave of data collection](#), Follow-up 3. We look forward to speaking with you soon or, if you take part in-person, welcoming you back to the Data Collection Site when it is safe to do so.

CLSA COVID-19 Studies

In responses to the coronavirus pandemic, the CLSA launched three studies to examine both the immediate and long-term impacts.



CLSA COVID-19 Questionnaire Study

More than 28,000 CLSA participants took part in the CLSA COVID-19 Questionnaire Study to investigate the effects of the pandemic on older adults, exploring how they cope, the impacts on their physical and mental health and changes to how they access health-care services. Funding for the CLSA COVID-19 Questionnaire Study was provided by the [Juravinski Research Institute](#), [McMaster University](#), the [McMaster Institute for Research on Aging](#), the [Nova Scotia COVID-19 Health Research Coalition](#) and the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#). More information and baseline findings from the CLSA COVID-19 Questionnaire Study are available through the Data Dashboard.



CLSA COVID-19 Antibody Study

In fall 2020, a partnership with the Government of Canada's [COVID-19 Immunity Task Force](#) launched the CLSA [COVID-19 Antibody Study](#). The study collected and analyzed blood samples from more than 18,500 CLSA participants in 10 provinces. Study participants also completed a questionnaire, either by phone or online, that collected information about symptoms, risk factors, health-care use and the psychosocial and economic impacts of COVID-19. [Read the full update](#).



CLSA COVID-19 Brain Health Study

The COVID-19 Brain Health Study is a sub-study of the CLSA, investigating the impact of COVID-19 on cognitive function, brain structure and brain function in adults aged 55 to 80 years. The goal of the study is to better understand how COVID-19 affects cognition and the brain, both in the immediate and in the longer term. The study is funded by the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research](#) and the [Weston Brain Institute](#). Learn more about the COVID-19 Brain Health Study at www.clsa-elcv.ca/brain.

Spotlight on the CLSA COVID-19 Research: Findings from the COVID-19 Baseline Survey

Click the image to enlarge.

Of the **28,559** participants who took part in the survey:

59%
reported separation from family

22%
reported being unable to access usual healthcare

20%
reported the presence of depressive symptoms

6%
reported moderate or severe anxiety

13%
reported being unable to access necessary supplies or food

57%
reported negative or very negative consequences of COVID-19 on the participant and their household



CLSA launches new wave of data collection

This summer, the CLSA launched a new wave of full data collection from participants across Canada.

The wave of data collection, known as Follow-up 3, includes repeat questions from previous data collection waves to allow researchers to be able to assess how the health and well-being of participants change over time. In addition, some new questions and tests related to various aspects of participants' physical and mental health have been added.

[Read more](#)



Participant Spotlight

“It’s very important that your world not close in mentally, that you’re still reaching out and learning. Friends are important, family is important, social connections are important. As I say, I play bridge quite seriously at clubs and in tournaments. Not anymore because of COVID. I play online now. But that means I know a lot of people.”

Marion from Vancouver, B.C., on getting older and the importance of staying connected.

[Read Q&A](#)



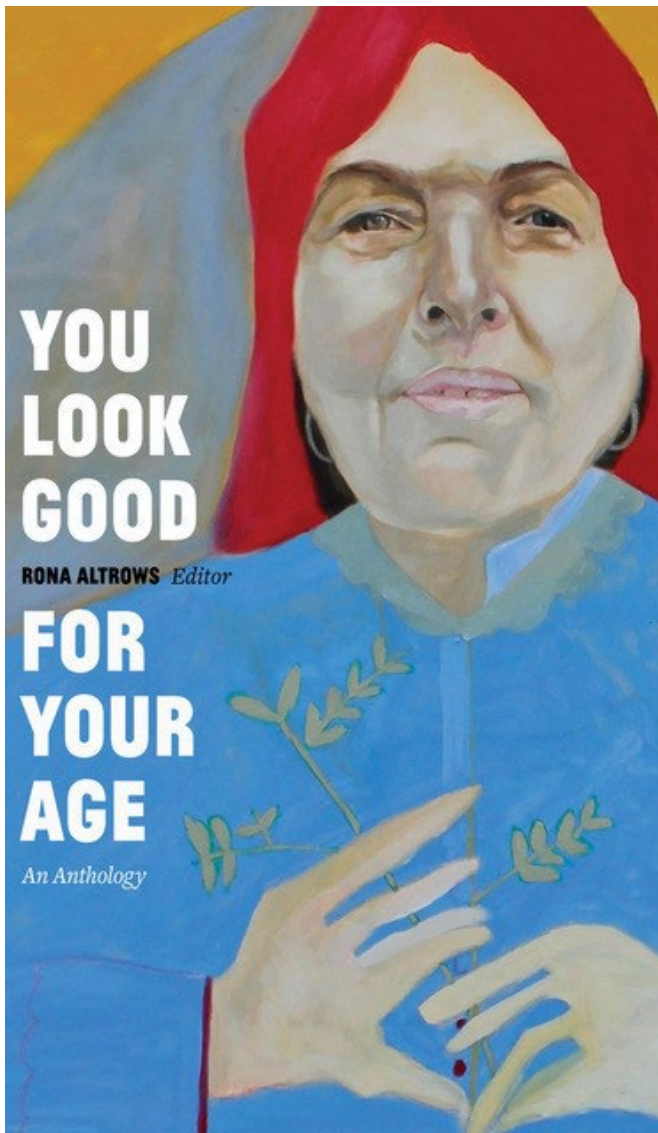
Rising Stars: Showcasing CLSA Trainees

“The most interesting thing I have learned from my work with the CLSA is that early life adversity not only have developmental impacts in childhood and adolescent years, but that it increases the risk of additional stressors, and impacts healthy aging trajectories by exerting a long-lasting impact on physical, psychological, and social health across the lifespan.”

Divya Joshi is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact at McMaster

University. Her CLSA research focuses on examining the pathways linking exposure to adverse childhood experiences and poor health outcomes in the aging population.

[Read Q&A](#)



CLSA Book Corner: Aging in three-year increments

Laura Wershler has spent much of her life advocating for and writing about sexual and reproductive health. But when she was invited to contribute to a book anthology about women and ageism, she decided to share her experience as a participant in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging.

[You Look Good for Your Age](#), published by the University of Alberta Press in 2021, features both established and emerging writers who share their insights into aging through short stories, poetry and essays. Wershler decided to tap into her training as a journalist to write “Aging in Three-Year Increments.”

[Read more](#)

In Brief

CLSA contributes to World Health Organization’s Decade of Ageing Baseline Report

Findings from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging are included in the Baseline Report for the [Decade of Healthy Ageing](#), which runs from 2021 to 2030. CLSA leaders Parminder Raina, Susan Kirkland, Christina Wolfson and Lauren Griffith, along with a team of researchers from across the country, offered an in-depth analysis of CLSA data, providing a nationally representative picture of the aging process in Canada. The use of CLSA data, along with data from other national studies, confirmed that healthy aging reflects a multidimensional construct. The CLSA also received special thanks for providing data analysis support for the project. [Read the full report.](#)

CLSA awarded \$1M to address undiagnosed dementia gap

The [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#) announced nearly \$1 million in federal funding to support CLSA research that aims to address the knowledge gap around undiagnosed dementia and improve understanding of known and emerging risk factors related to the disease. The CLSA dementia initiative will link CLSA data with provincial health-care databases to better understand the burden of undiagnosed dementia and how population-based data can be used to understand its risk factors.

Making Headlines

3 in 5 middle-aged and older Canadians had 'traumatic' childhood experiences

CLSA research, [published](#) in *CMAJ Open*, found that adverse childhood experiences are highly prevalent in the Canadian population, with 62% of CLSA participants reporting at least one exposure to childhood abuse, neglect, intimate partner violence or other household adversity. [Read more.](#)

Health Matters: Dr. Christina Wolfson

Dr. Christina Wolfson, CLSA principal investigator, appeared on *Health Matters* and chatted about the CLSA, its dedicated participants and the platform's overall goal of finding ways to help older adults live long and live well. [Click "Learning from our Elders" to listen to the show.](#)

Social isolation tied to high blood pressure in women

CLSA research findings, [published](#) in the *Journal of Hypertension* and led by Dr. Annalijn Conklin of the University of British Columbia, were featured in the *New York Times*. The study found women who are socially isolated have a higher risk of high blood pressure than men. [Read more.](#)

Poor sleep linked to increased risk of multiple chronic conditions

Dr. Saverio Stranges of Western University's Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry spoke to the *Sudbury Star* about his CLSA project that found poor sleep quality and the duration of sleep are linked to the occurrence of multiple chronic conditions. [Read more.](#)

CLSA Events

Update on the CLSA

In June, the CLSA hosted a [special event for Alberta participants](#) to provide an update on CLSA research activities, including the CLSA COVID-19 studies.

All previous events are available on the CLSA website: www.clsa-elcv.ca/stay-informed/clsa-videos

Nation-wide participant webinar this winter

Join us this winter for a national update on the CLSA. Webinars will be held in French and English on Zoom. Keep an eye on your email or visit the CLSA website at www.clsa-elcv.ca for updates.

Keep in Touch

Follow-up 3 interviews are now being scheduled and will continue until 2024. As always, it's extremely important to

provide us with any changes to your contact information. Have you moved, changed your telephone number or email address since you were last contacted by the CLSA, or have you recently created an email address that you can share with us? If so, please contact us:

Web: clsa-elcv.ca/update-your-details

Email: info@clsa-elcv.ca

Phone: **1-866-999-8303**

If you are interested in being featured in a future CLSA newsletter, contact us at info@clsa-elcv.ca



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