

Research Centre Member Bios



Paul Holyoke
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Paul Holyoke, PhD, Director, SE Research Centre

Dr. Paul Holyoke's research interests include people's experiences with the Canadian health system; evaluation of health care policies, programs and systems; the governance and management of health care organizations in Canada; and societal perspectives on health, health care, illness and disability. He has a Ph.D. in Health Policy from the University of Toronto, a MSc(Econ) from the London School of Economics, and a law degree from the University of Toronto. From 2005-2011, Paul served a 6-year term as a member of the Board of Directors of the Waterloo-Wellington Local Health Integration Network, and he chaired its Community Council.



Maedean Brown
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Maedean Brown, MMHSc, PMP, Manager, Research Operations

Maedean has been working in the healthcare research environment for over 15 years, where she has completed research projects in academic, clinical, and non-profit environments. Prior to joining the SE Research Centre, Maedean worked for the Cyril & Dorothy, Joel & Jill Reitman Centre, conducting research with caregivers of persons with dementia. During her tenure, Maedean was instrumental in developing the evaluation framework for the Enhancing Care (EC) Program, which was being scaled across all 14 LHINs provincially. Along with her years of research experience, Maedean brings her training in project management to her current role as Manager, Research Operations. In this role, Maedean ensures the effective execution and evaluation of the annual research plan of the SE Research Centre. She also ensures that all SE Health researchers are supported appropriately to plan, conduct, and translate innovative and collaborative research activities into action.



Jessie Leitão
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Jessie Leitão, Senior Research Admin Assistant

In her current role as Senior Research Admin Assistant, Jessie provides administrative support to the Research Centre team. With over 20 years of experience at SE Health, Jessie brings a wealth of knowledge to the Centre by helping to manage and coordinate the research portfolio, plan high level detailed budget for the department and research projects, administrative processes, project organization, and proposal editing. She assists in the development of, and works on different methodologies for, organizing project surveys, data collection and running reports using SPSS, Excel, and SurveyMonkey. Jessie promotes the use of evidence-informed decision making throughout the organization by maintaining SE Health's library of resources including a journal article database and Endnote. Jessie brings vast international experience to her role, having previously worked as an Executive Assistant for multinational companies in Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Heather McNeil
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Heather McNeil, PhD, Senior Research Associate

Dr. Heather McNeil is passionate about partnering with older adults and caregivers to improve their quality of life through innovations in the systems that support them. As a Senior Research Associate, Heather's role with the SE Research Centre is to lead the development and implementation of health services research projects within our priority research fields. Prior to joining SE Health, Heather completed her PhD in the University of Waterloo's Health, Aging, and Well-being program. During this time, as a research associate with the [Geriatric Health Systems \(GHS\) Group](#) Heather co-created the Seniors Helping as Research Partners (SHARP) Group to build meaningful partnerships with older adults and caregivers in the community. She has expertise in patient and community engagement, health innovation for older adults, patient experience, qualitative and mixed methods, and knowledge translation and exchange. Her dissertation, The ECOTECH project, funded through the [AGE-WELL](#) Canadian Network Centre of Excellence focused on the engagement of older adults and their caregivers in regional health innovation ecosystems.

To create balance in her life, Heather enjoys spending time with family and friends, hiking and practicing yoga. Follow Heather on Twitter [@h_mcneilUW](#).



Courtney Shaw
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Courtney Shaw, BA, MSc, PhD Senior Research Associate

Dr. Courtney Shaw has worked in health research for 8 years and has an interest in health systems transformation, innovative models of care delivery, patient safety and quality improvement, and collaborative co-designed research approaches. She has an undergraduate degree in Political Science and International Relations from the University of British Columbia (2011) and a Master's of Science in International Health from the University of Leeds (2012). From 2013-2015 she worked for a consulting firm in London, England collaborating on research projects in the Health Systems and Public Health portfolios. In 2018 she completed her PhD at the University of Bradford with a thesis entitled "Towards Dementia Friendly Emergency Departments". Her doctoral work was a mixed methods exploratory study identifying opportunities to improve the quality and safety of care provided to people living with cognitive impairments when they access care in the emergency department.



Karthika Yogaratnam
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Karthika Yogaratnam, BA, BSc, MPH, Research Associate

In her role as Research Associate with the SE Research Centre, Karthika participates in project management and coordination of various research activities. Most of her projects focus on bridging the gap between innovation and clinical practice. She also actively assists on research projects aimed at improving health care, aging, and end of life experiences. Karthika's previous areas of research work have included knowledge mobilization and patient engagement, public health program evaluation, health equity (racialized and immigrant older adults), maternal-child health, and diabetes prevention strategies. Karthika received her Master of Public Health degree, specializing in Population Health Sciences, from Simon Fraser University, and both her Honours Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and Honours Bachelor of Arts in Gerontology, from McMaster University.



Rosemary Georges
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Rosemary Georges, BSc, MSc, Research Associate

Rosemary has taken on various roles in health research for the past six years and has an interest in mental health research, social determinants of health, immigrant and minority mental health, and patient and family care for cancer patients. From 2012-2015 she served as a research trainee at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's (CAMH) Social Aetiology of Mental Illness (SAMi) program where she contributed to studies that investigated the social determinants of mental health. In 2018 she successfully defended her Master's thesis on the mental health needs of Syrian refugees and immigrants which was a qualitative investigation that explored the mental health perceptions, resources, and coping methods of Syrian migrants in Canada. Rosemary has a Bachelor of Science degree with Honours in Psychology and Health Studies (2015) from York University, and recently completed a Master of Science in Health Services Research (2018) from the University of Toronto's Institute of Health Policy Management and Evaluation (IHPME).



Elizabeth Kalles
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Elizabeth Kalles, BSc, Research Assistant

Elizabeth brings to SE Health a passion for research and a love of rigorous and thorough protocol and procedure. Her background is in psychology with a focus on clinical psychological research, and a minor in biology. In her role with the SE Research Centre, Elizabeth plays a key role assisting on multiple, concurrent projects, in addition to leading smaller projects for internal stakeholders.



Chanile Vines
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Chanile Vines, MSc, Research Assistant

Chanile Vines is a champion in the fight against Alzheimer's and all other forms of dementia. She is building a groundbreaking dementia care app, It Takes a Village (iTAV), to provide person-centred care using a proprietary dementia-care mapping technique. With a strong background in dementia care and research, Chanile brings her expertise and dedication to SE Research Centre, assisting and leading multiple projects. Chanile earned her BSc. in Psychology at the University of Toronto (2012) and her MSc. in Psychology from The University of Liverpool (2019). Her research interests centre around the intersection of health care practices for aging adults and digital technology.



Margaret Saari RN PhD
CIHR Health System Impact Fellow
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Margaret Saari, RN PhD, Post-Doctoral Fellow

Dr. Margaret Saari is a CIHR Health Systems Impact Fellow with the University of Waterloo and SE Research Centre. Her research interests include effective utilization of routinely-collected data, increased engagement of patients and families in care planning, delivery and design, and integration of community services to improve the quality and experience of community care. Margaret completed her PhD at the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto where she now holds Adjunct Faculty status. Prior to moving to a career in research, Margaret worked clinically as a registered nurse in ambulatory care settings and as a hospital-based care coordinator facilitating client transitions back to community.



Claudia Lai, PhD, MSc, BSc (pharm)
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Claudia Lai, PhD, MS, BSc (Pharm) Post-Doctoral Fellow

Claudia Lai is a postdoctoral fellow with the University of Laval and SE Research Centre. She is a health services researcher with over 15 years of policy and research experience within public and academic environments. Prior to moving to a career in research, Claudia worked as a Senior Pharmacist at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and as a Drug Information Specialist at the Ontario College of Pharmacists and Ontario Pharmacists' Association. Claudia recently completed her PhD at the Institute of Health Policy Management and Evaluation, Dalla School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. Her doctoral research explored tools for engaging patients (and their informal caregivers) in health and information exchange processes. Claudia's research interests include shared decision making, healthy aging in the community, digital patient engagement, and health systems transformation.