

## “Research Centre Bios”



Nancy Lefebre  
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***Nancy Lefebre, BScN, MScN, Chief Clinical Executive, and Senior Vice President Knowledge & Practice***

Nancy Lefebre is leading the creation and transfer of wisdom throughout SE Health, positioning the organization to become a knowledge leader in health care. Nancy is committed to ensuring that a strong evidence base underpins all health care practices at SE Health. In addition to establishing a collaborative research unit and management support structure, Nancy is one of the first nursing leaders in Canada to complete the Executive Training for Research Application (EXTRA) Fellowship program and is now leading the integration of evidence into management decision making throughout the organization. Nancy’s passion and commitment to nursing leadership and excellence is reflected in the awards SE Health has received – including being named a Best Employer, Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO), a Healthy Workplace Initiatives BPSO, and the winner of the CHSRF Chair Achievement Award in Nursing/Health Human Resources. In 2007, Nancy was awarded the RAO Award of Merit for her outstanding contributions to the nursing profession, and the Canadian College of Health Services Executives Nursing Leadership award in recognition of her nursing leadership. Nancy brings to SE Health more than 25 years of experience in the North American health care sector, with a focus on community care. From front-line practice to management, as well as the development of new business and clinical leadership, Nancy has brought her energy, enthusiasm and commitment to community to the variety of roles she has held throughout her career.



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***Paul Holyoke, Ph.D., Director of Research and Program Development***

Paul’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 M.Sc. (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 LHIN, 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.



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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. With over 20 years of experience at SE Health, Jessie brings a wealth of knowledge to the Centre regarding administrative processes, project organization, and proposal editing. Jessie maintains the research tracking system including research projects, expenses, and budget reconciliation. She also informs the Centre staff of upcoming conference opportunities. Jessie promotes the use of evidence informed decision making throughout the organization by maintaining a 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.



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***Heather McNeil, PhD, Senior Research Associate***

Heather 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](#).



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***Courtney Shaw, BA, MSc., Senior Research Associate***

Courtney 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.



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***Bilal Khan, BHSc. (Comprehensive), MPH, Research Associate***

As a Research Associate with the SE Research Centre, Bilal contributes to studies on the needs of caregivers and health care providers to develop innovative educational resources and collaborative tools to improve health care experiences across the care continuum. He has partaken in additional research related to models of care for Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, as well as research on the shift in open dialogue about dying and death in society. Bilal’s previous areas of research work have included mental health implications of chronic diseases, secondary stroke prevention, cancer knowledge in cancer survivors, and recreational drug use/sexual behaviors among sexual minorities. Bilal has a Master of Public Health degree (MPH ‘18) from New York University (NYU) specializing in Epidemiology and a Bachelor of Health Science Honours (BHSc) from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT).



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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 seniors), 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.



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***Rosemary Yachouh, 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).



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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.