

Clinic Staff

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Heather Buckingham, M.S.W., R.S.W.



Heather Buckingham graduated with a Masters of Social Work degree from Wilfred Laurier University. She has been working at the Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic since January 2016. Prior to this Heather worked with the Multiple Sclerosis Clinic and Autism Spectrum Disorders Service.

Sean Curran, Bsc, MD, FRCP(C)

Anesthesiologist, Practicing in Pain Medicine
Associate Clinical Professor (Adjunct), McMaster University, Department of Anesthesia



Dr. Sean Curran is a UWO, McMaster University and University of Sydney (Australia) trained physician and has Royal College certifications in anesthesiology and pain

medicine. His approach focuses on increasing functional status and reducing the suffering associated with pain. Dr. Curran has trained in conventional medical treatments as well as advanced interventional (injection-based) techniques and psychological management of pain. He is the Program Director of the Pain Fellowship Program and Pain Clinical Teaching Unit Director at McMaster University. In 2017 Dr. Curran won the Laurence Chiu Award for Outstanding Collegiality and Professionalism from McMaster Department of Anesthesia.

Jaclyn De Azevedo, MHSc, Kin, MHSc. PA, CCPA



Jaclyn De Azevedo graduated from McMaster University in 2012, completing her Kinesiology degree. From there she worked as a Kinesiologist for one year before returning to her studies at the University of Toronto within the Physician Assistant program. She completed this program in 2015 and began work at the Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic January 2016. She continues to work with 11 physicians within the clinic and is responsible for initial consultations as well as ongoing follow ups with many of the chronic pain patients.

Susy Faria, Administrative Assistant/Receptionist



Susy started with the Chronic Pain Management Unit (CPMU) in February of 2012. She completed the Office Administration Medical Program at Mohawk College in 2004. She has been working at Hamilton Health Sciences since 2004 in various departments such as: Diagnostic Imaging, CCU, and Admitting.

Susy is in contact with our patients to schedule orientations, assessments and admissions, and looks after other administrative duties. She is one of the first staff members that patients and visitors meet when arriving at the CPMU.

Adria Fransson, BHSc (PT)



Physiotherapy helps individuals with chronic pain understand the science behind why their pain is persisting, helps with goal setting, problem solving and learning how to

change their nervous system so that they can move with more ease and have an increased quality of life.

We know evidence shows that exercise has physical, mental and emotional benefits for everyone including people living with pain. Our approach to exercise when working with people living with persistent pain may be slightly different from their previous exercise experiences. They will learn different strategies and skills to challenge their upregulated nervous system, deal with flare-ups more effectively and increase their confidence in over-coming obstacles that prevent them from being more active.

Adria Fransson is a licensed physiotherapist with over 18 years of experience in a variety of different rehabilitation settings. She has an immense interest in the world of pain and has taken a variety of pain courses over the years including pain neurophysiology education, concussion training, somatosensory rehabilitation, and cognitive behavioural therapy training. More recently she has been certified to do Pelvic Floor physiotherapy and an integral part in the development of the Michael G. DeGroot Chronic Pelvic Pain program. More recently, she has been involved in various research studies within the clinic and presented posters at the Canadian Pain Society.

Kathleen Gallagher, BA, BRLS, BHSc., OTReg.(Ont.)



Kathleen Gallagher graduated from McMaster University Occupational Therapy Program in 2000. Prior to this she completed her Bachelor of Recreation and Leisure Studies degree as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Child Studies at Brock University. Kathleen has been a member of the MGD Team (previously CPMU Team) since 2000. She has continued to pursue education to enhance her clinical skills by taking courses in the Clinical Behavioural Sciences program at McMaster University i.e. Group

Therapy, Psychotherapy Level 1 & 2. She has attended many conferences over the years most recently CBT and OT Best Practice for Chronic pain Management and Assessment. Kathleen has had involvement in teaching at the McMaster Occupational Therapy School as well as being a Preceptor for clinical placements assisting Occupational Therapy students learn more about chronic pain and the treatment of patients living with this condition in hopes to continue to increase awareness of all health care providers with respect to chronic pain. Kathleen has been credentialed by the Canadian Academy of Pain Management.

Kathleen is a member of COTO (College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario) and OSOT (Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists).

Dr. Eleni G. Hapidou, Ph.D., C.Psych., Psychologist
Diplomate, Canadian Academy of Pain Management (CAPM)



Dr. Hapidou received her Doctorate in Psychology from McMaster University in 1989. She completed three post-docs: a) University of Western Ontario (with a fellowship from the Arthritis Society) (1988-1991), b) University of Waterloo (Research Scientist, 1991-1992), and c) McMaster University – Chedoke McMaster Hospitals (Neuropsychology and Clinical Psychology Residency, 1992-1993) before becoming a Registered Psychologist with the College of Psychologists of Ontario in 1993.

Dr. Hapidou has been a psychologist with the Interdisciplinary Chronic Pain Management Program since 1992. In her role, she has trained several psychologists, residents, and students in the field. She has also been a Faculty member in Psychiatry, Psychology, Bachelor of Health Sciences Program and Clinical Behavioral Sciences. She has served two terms as a) the Psychology Practice Leader and b) Chief of

Psychology at Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS). She has also served two terms on the New Investigator Fund and Early Career Awards Committees at HHS.

Dr. Hapidou has founded the Yoga classes at the Interdisciplinary Pain Program, and has been serving as the Yoga Instructor since 2009.

She is currently a psychologist at the Michael G DeGroot Pain Clinic, and an executive member of the Michael G DeGroot Pain Institute for Research and Care. She has her own research program in program evaluation, and is involved in many research projects, has presented nationally and internationally, and has published extensively. She has also developed psychometric instruments to measure pain satisfaction, and goal accomplishment, and has validated several measures for use in research with patients with chronic pain. She is a reviewer for several pain journals such as the Journal of Pain (editorial board) and the Clinical Journal of Pain. She is also a Diplomate of the Canadian Academy of Pain Management (Vice President) and teaches credentialing courses for an interdisciplinary group of clinicians.

Lydia Hatcher, BSc, MD, CCFP, FCFP, CHE, D-CAPM



Role: Physician

Years worked in Program: 3

Other relevant experience: Pain management for 25 years, Focused practice certificate in chronic pain and psychotherapy since 2013. Medical Inspector, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Recognized medicolegal expert in Chronic Pain management.

Current research involved with: The McMaster Cannabis Research Consortium and DataCann Cannabis Registry

Teaching involved with: Associate Clinic Professor of Family Medicine, McMaster University: teaching formally and informally to medical students, Family Medicine, Anesthesia, Pain resident and fellows, Chronic Pain FRCP Fellowship.

National and International speaker on chronic pain management. Workshops (Half day) on Chronic pain and addiction, at Touchstone Institute, Toronto to international medical graduates who have been accepted into Canadian residency programs in Ontario.

Laura Katz, Ph.D., C.Psych.



Dr. Katz received her M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Queen's University, and completed an accredited internship at the London Health Sciences Consortium in the health and rehabilitation track. Her research has primarily focused on how individuals cope with chronic illnesses, and particularly on how women with chronic pelvic pain utilize strategies for self-regulation and mental wellbeing. She is registered as a psychologist with the College of Psychologists of Ontario with adults in the areas of Clinical, Health, and Rehabilitation Psychology. She has presented at both national and international conferences, and published her work in peer-reviewed journals.

Dr. Katz is a psychologist at the Michael G. DeGroot Clinic. She employs a cognitive-behavioural framework for assessment, conceptualization and psychological treatment to help individuals manage their chronic pain, engage in value-driven activities, and improve their overall quality of life. Dr. Katz is involved in ongoing program development, research, teaching, and supervision, and has also developed the Interdisciplinary Chronic Pelvic Pain Program at the Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic.

Dr. Katz is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Medicine at McMaster University. She is involved with the teaching and supervision of academic psychology students, clinical psychology practicum and internship students, and informally to medical students and pain residents and fellows.

Dr. Katz is a member of the Institute of Pain Research and Management at McMaster University, the Canadian Pain Society, and registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

Greg Luth, BHSc. (OT), OT Reg. (Ont.)



Greg graduated with his Bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy from McMaster University. He has worked at the CPMU since 1995. Prior to joining the Program he worked in out-patient psychiatry at McMaster University Medical Centre and the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Programme at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Carrie-Lynn Meyer, RRT, BA



Carrie-Lynn Meyer has been working as a Clinical Manager at the MGD Pain Clinic for past 3 years. She received her Bachelorette Degree in Advanced Diploma Respiratory Therapy. In the past, she spent 8 years in total working as a Clinical Manager, 10 years as a Chief of Respiratory Therapy Paractice, while also working in Critical Care for 11 years as a Registered Respiratory Therapist. Other areas of responsibility held by Carrie are: SIS Clinic, Surgical Clinic, ALS/Adult Neurology Clinic, West End Urgent Care Centre, Self-Management Program.

Lisa Patterson (Research Coordinator)



Melissa Persadie, B.A. (Hons.), M.S.W. R.S.W.



Melissa Persadie graduated from University of Toronto Masters of Social Work Program in 2010. Prior to this she completed her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at McMaster University in 2007. Melissa has been a member of the Michael G. DeGroote Pain Clinic since 2017 and she has continued to pursue education and research opportunities to enhance her clinical skills and knowledge while working with patients and their families living with Chronic Pain.

Melissa is a member of the Ontario College of Social Workers and was employed with Hamilton Health Sciences as a Social Worker in Pediatric Mental Health and then moved to Emergency Medicine where she worked for five years. Melissa has additional experience working as a Social Worker in Family Medicine and Outpatient Pediatric Mental Health, in Toronto, Ontario.

Melissa has a special interest in working with families and couples who are living with chronic pain and hopes to increase awareness and accessible treatment for this condition.

Laura Pokoradi (Charge Nurse)



Anna Rogers, B.Sc.Phm., Rph., Clinical Pharmacist



Ms. Rogers has had over 15 years of clinical experience working as a pharmacist on various rehabilitation teams at HHSC. She has been with the Chronic Pain Management Unit since 2003. She believes that an important concept in pain management is that each individual is different and will respond differently to situations, treatments, and medications. Medications may play an important role in the management of chronic pain, but they should be used wisely. The use of opioids requires careful management to achieve benefits that outweigh the risks and negative side effects from treatment. Benefit is suggested when there is a significant increase in the person's activities of

daily living, when there is a considerable decrease in pain levels, when there is a more positive and promising attitude and when adverse effects are minimal or manageable. Unfortunately, medications alone are seldom sufficient without the additional use of other approaches to treat the patient with chronic pain, emphasizing the importance of the multidisciplinary team. In fact, our team approach in the treatment of chronic pain often lessens the need for medications and other more invasive procedures. “If you are a patient who suffers from chronic pain, you may be on medications, and you should know why you are taking them, how much and how often you need to take them and whether to take the medication before, with, or after meals or at bedtime. Because of the risk of interactions between drugs, some medications should not be generally taken together or should be taken at different times during the day to avoid unwanted reactions. Medications can be confusing, especially if you take them for more than one medical condition”, advises Ms. Rogers. Ms. Rogers meets with the patient on a weekly basis. After discussing each patient with the physician, together they explore various drug options and implement strategies to optimize medication therapy. “We work together along with the patient and sometimes the family to decide on a treatment plan with the goal of less pain, more function and return to everyday activities with the least, manageable, medication side effects possible”.

John Secen, MSc., MSc(OT), OT Reg. (Ont.)



John Secen received his occupational therapy degree from Western University in 2012. Prior to that he obtained his Master of Science degree in Neuroscience from the University of British Columbia in 2010, and an undergraduate Honours Bachelor of Science degree in Neuroscience at Brock University in 2006.



Prior to joining the Michael G. DeGroot Chronic Pain Clinic as an Occupational Therapist/Case Manager, John was employed within the Hamilton Health Sciences Organization as an occupational therapist in orthopedics, trauma and medicine. He has additional experience working in acute care in Kamloops, BC.

Since 2015, John has held an adjunct Assistant Clinical Professor position with the School of Rehabilitation Sciences at McMaster University, responsible for teaching students in the Masters of Science Occupational Therapy Program. He is a member of Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy, Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists, College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.

Monica Szeliga, RD, MScFN



Registered Dietitian. Worked in nutritional counselling of individuals from all stages of the lifecycle since 2014, and most recently began working in more specialized areas, such as chronic pain, diabetes and COPD management. Obtained Certified Diabetes Educator accreditation in 2017.

Ramesh Zacharias, MD FRCS DAAPM CMD



Assistant Clinical Professor
Department of Anesthesia
McMaster University

Dr. Zacharias received his Doctorate of Medicine from the University of Western Ontario in 1980, and subsequently his Fellowship in General Surgery in 1987. He was a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Washington from 1985-1987.

Dr. Zacharias was Founder and CEO of Med-Emerg International Inc from 1983-2009 Canada's largest physician recruiting company. He held that position while performing a number of leadership roles in the field of medicine.

From 2001-2007 he served on the Board of Governors of Ryerson University.

Dr. Zacharias was a member of the Geriatric Long Term Care Death Review Committee from 2015-2018. In 2012 he became an investigating coroner for Ontario, and from 2017-2018 he was the Regional Supervising Coroner in the Province of Ontario.

He is currently the Medical Director of the Michael G. DeGroote Pain Clinic which is one of the largest Academic Interdisciplinary Pain Clinics in Canada.

He is the Co-Principal Investigator on DataCann, a National Registry on medicinal cannabis as well as the Principal Investigator on a three-armed randomized prospective clinical trial on Cannabidiol (CBD) and Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in chronic pain. He is also the Co-Investigator on a chart review to determine the degree to which cannabis has modulated opioid consumption.



Dr. Zacharias is Co-Chair of the Physician Advisory Group for the Centre for Medical Cannabis Research (CMCR) at McMaster University.