



Toronto  
Public  
Health  
Research

2015



## **Message from Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health**

Toronto Public Health (TPH) works to reduce health inequities and improve the health of the whole population. Incorporating research findings and other forms of evidence in program and policy development contributes to achieving this goal. Although TPH program and policy initiatives are informed by local, national, and international research and other forms of evidence, this report profiles research conducted under the auspices of TPH.

This year TPH revised its Research Ethics Review (RER) policy and established its first Research Ethics Board (REB). The policy contributes to ensuring that research conducted under the auspices of TPH is relevant and that key ethical principles are considered. This is critical as the research often involves vulnerable populations, sensitive topics and information, and novel approaches.

This year fourteen internal, collaborative and external research projects received TPH ethics approval. In addition, TPH staff were authors of 20 scientific publications/ presentations/ posters related to projects approved through the TPH RER process from 2011-2015. In the future we look forward to increasing the scope of TPH led and collaborative research with academics and community partners.



## **Message from Heather Sampson, Chair, Toronto Public Health REB**

Canada is committed to the ethical conduct of research as evidenced by the second edition of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2) (<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/index/>). I had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the TCPS2. It is a pleasure to be actively involved in its practical application as Chair of the first Toronto Public Health (TPH) Research Ethics Board (REB).

The TPH REB membership and governance complies with the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act. REB members collectively bring ethics, privacy, legal, methodological, content, and community expertise to the review process. Since its inception in April 2015 the REB has increased capacity in research ethics review. Public health research ethics is evolving and there is much to learn. For example, the Panel on Research Ethics and the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research are creating new educational resources in support of the TCPS2. TPH REB members will take part in this initiative as it is introduced.

I would like to acknowledge and celebrate TPH REB members' commitment and contribution to the ethical conduct of public health research. As they continue to operationalize the TCPS2 principles of Respect for Persons, Justice, and Concern for Welfare in research ethics reviews they, along with research teams and participants, contribute to the ethical conduct of public health research and related evidence generation.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thank You to the Following People Who Contributed to the Research Ethics Review Process

- Directors/Managers reviewed proposals for relevance, feasibility, and scientific merit
- REB Members conducted ethics review of proposals
- Dia Mamatis, Kate Bassil, Heather Rilkoff, Donna Ansara, Effie Gournis, and Erika Khandor supported divisional review of projects for scientific merit
- Tracey dal Bianco, Megan Easto, and Jeff Maus reviewed proposals for privacy and information management issues
- Jane Speakman provided legal expertise
- Cathy Canonizado and Bibi Nasib-Mohammed provided administrative support

## **2015 Highlights**

- New Research Ethics Review (RER) policy implemented and website created
- Information sessions held for TPH Directors, Managers, Supervisors, Consultants, and staff planning to submit proposals for review
- First Research Ethics Board (REB) established
- 34 projects screened, if necessary, to determine if RER required
- 26 projects submitted for RER, including 13 screened projects
- 14 projects received ethics approval
- TPH staff authored 20 scientific publications, conference presentations/posters disseminating findings of projects approved through the TPH RER process

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## Research Ethics Review Policy and Process

In April, 2015 Toronto Public Health (TPH) implemented a new Research Ethics Review (RER) Policy and Research Ethics Board (REB). The [policy](#) outlines the criteria for TPH RER and describes the five step RER process:

- Pre-screening, when necessary, to determine if projects require RER
- Organizational assessment for relevance, feasibility, scientific merit, and privacy and information management issues
- REB review of projects which receive organizational approval
- Notifying Principal Investigator(s) of the REB decision
- Ongoing ethics monitoring until completion

In 2015, 34 projects were screened to determine if they required TPH RER. Twenty one of these projects did not require RER. Most of these projects were internal evaluations of TPH programs. Twenty six projects were submitted for TPH RER, 13 of which were pre-screened. Two student projects were subsequently withdrawn by the Investigators. Fourteen projects received TPH REB approval, one of which was submitted for review in 2014. Eleven projects submitted in 2015 were still undergoing ethics review as of December 31, 2015.

More information about the RER process, information about the types of projects requiring RER, and responses to Frequently Asked Questions about the process is available on the TPH [RER website](#). If you have other questions regarding the RER Policy and process please contact:

Karen Wade, Supervisor, Healthy Public Policy  
Phone: 416-338-0912  
E-mail: [kwade@toronto.ca](mailto:kwade@toronto.ca)

## Research Ethics Board

The Research Ethics Board (REB), which meets monthly, is comprised of 15 Members. Heather Sampson, the REB Chair, is an Assistant Professor, Department of Community and Family Medicine at the University of Toronto (U of T). She also manages the clinical research program at the Michael Garron Hospital/Toronto East Health Network (formerly Toronto East General Hospital). Heather is a full member of the Joint Centre for Bioethics, U of T, and serves on the Toronto General Hospital/University Health Network REB. She contributed to Public Health Ontario's Ethical Framework for Public Health Projects and the 2014 Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

The following TPH staff are members of the REB:

- Nancy Day (Performance and Standards)
- Dr. Meg Gassanov (Communicable Disease Control)
- Morris Komakech (Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention)
- Heather Richards (Healthy Environments)
- Dr. Herveen Sachdeva (Communicable Disease Control)
- Anne Wenger (Healthy Communities)
- Debra Williams-Conliffe (Healthy Families)
- Linda Wood (Healthy Public Policy)

External REB members are:

- Dr. Patricia Hughes (Community Member)
- Dr. Nancy Kreiger (University of Toronto)
- Maria McDonald (Community Member)
- Dr. Brenda Roche (The Wellesley Institute)
- Dr. Thomas Tenkate (Ryerson University)
- Connie Uetrecht (Community Member)

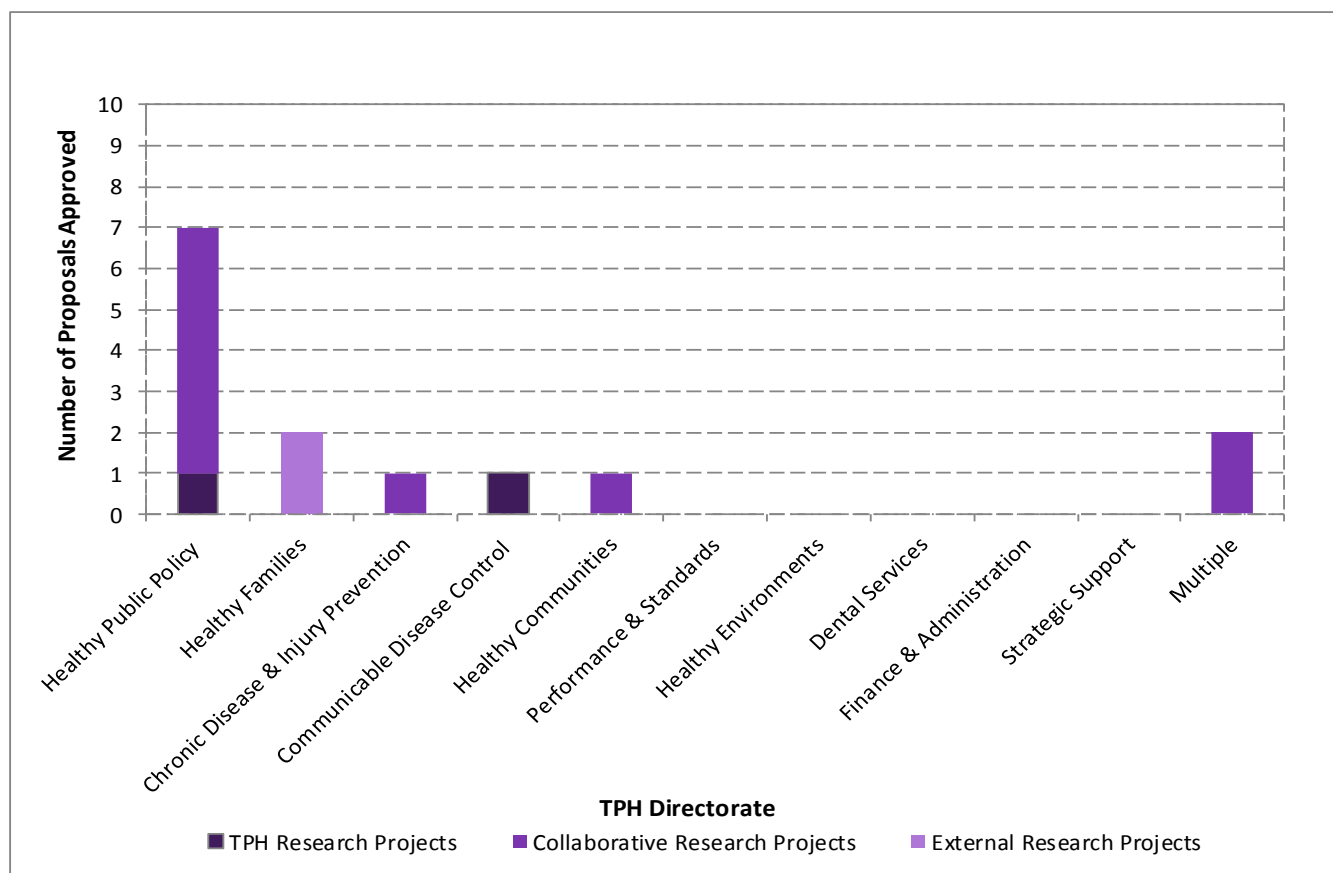
## Research Proposals Approved

In 2015, fourteen research proposals relevant to seven Toronto Public Health (TPH) Directorates were approved through the TPH Research Ethics Review (RER) process. One of the proposals approved in 2015 was submitted in 2014. Two proposals approved were submitted by external researchers, two were submitted by TPH staff and ten were collaborative projects involving TPH staff and external researchers. (see Figure 1)

### Relevance of Proposals to TPH Directorates

Most proposals were assessed for feasibility and relevance to Toronto Public Health's mission and mandate by one Directorate. Seven were assessed by the Healthy Public Policy Directorate. Two were assessed by the Healthy Families Directorate, and one was assessed by each of the Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, Communicable Disease Control, and Healthy Communities Directorates. One proposal was assessed by two Directorates (Communicable Disease Control and Healthy Environments) and one was assessed by four Directorates (Healthy Families, Healthy Public Policy, Healthy Communities, and Healthy Environments). (see Figure1)

**Figure 1: Research Proposals Approved by Type and TPH Directorate Relevance 2015**

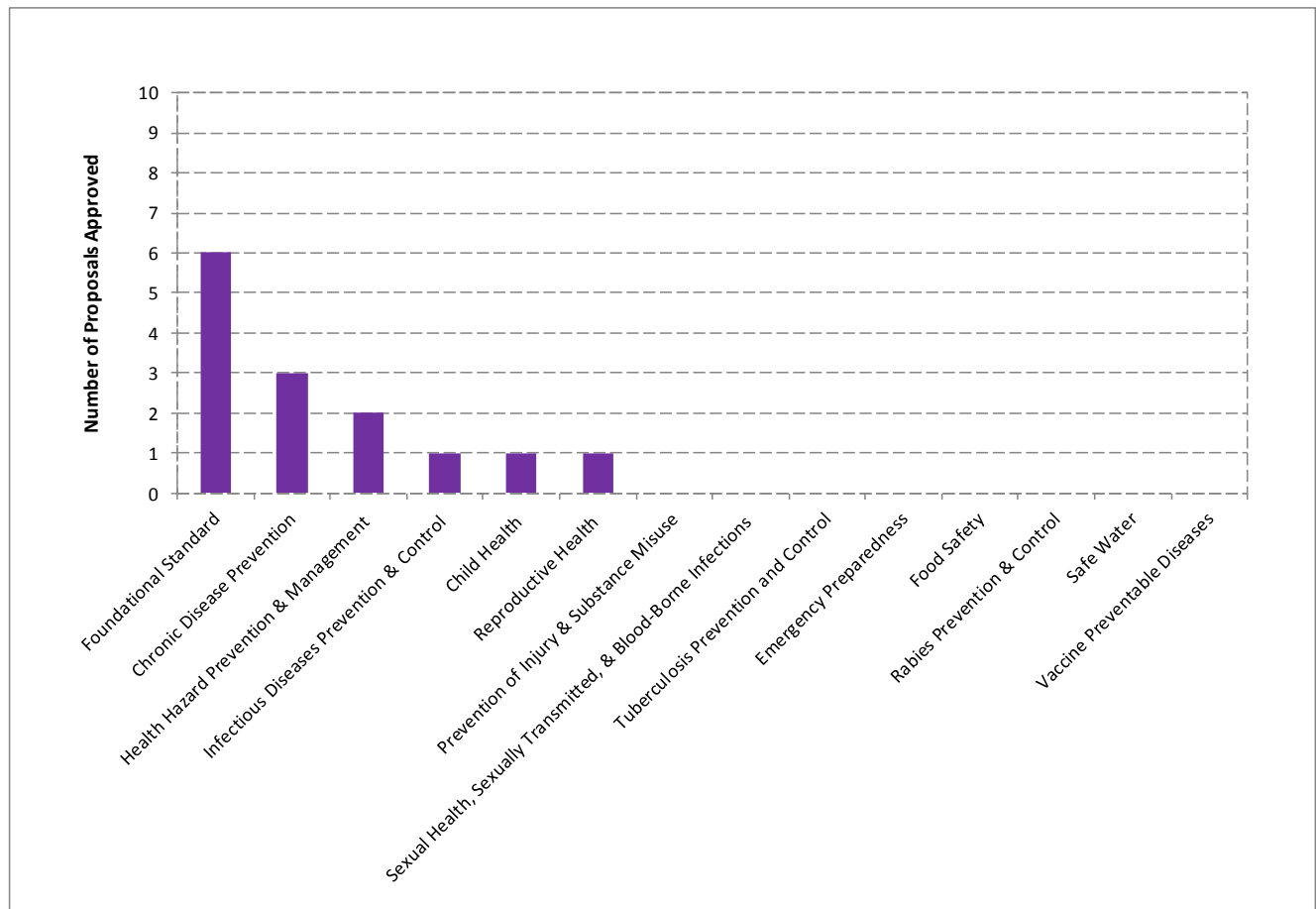




## Relevance of Proposals to the Ontario Public Health Standards

Relevance to the Ontario Public Health Standards is a key consideration for research projects conducted under the auspices of TPH. Research proposals approved were relevant to a total of six standards. Six proposals were relevant to the Foundational Standard. Three were relevant to the Chronic Disease Prevention Standard and two were relevant to the Health Hazard Prevention and Management Standard. One was relevant to the Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control, Child Health or Reproductive Health Standard. (see Figure 2)

**Figure 2: Research Proposals Approved by Relevance to Ontario Public Health Standards, 2015**



## Research Proposals Approved by Ontario Public Health Standard

A complete list of all research proposals approved in 2015, by Ontario Public Health Standard, is presented below. A key TPH contact person is provided for internal and collaborative projects only.

### Foundational Standard

1. Traffic Collisions in Toronto: Risk Factors for Pedestrian and Cyclist Injury or Death  
Contact: Heather Rilkoﬀ, Health Policy Specialist, [hrilkof@toronto.ca](mailto:hrilkof@toronto.ca), 416-338-5907
2. The Effects of Extreme Weather Conditions on Injury and Death in Homeless Persons, Low Income Controls, and The General Population  
Contact: Kate Bassil, Manager Healthy Public Policy, [kbassil@toronto.ca](mailto:kbassil@toronto.ca), 416-338-7413
3. An Analysis of Discrimination and Health Outcomes in the Canadian Community Health Survey  
Contact: Donna Ansara, Health Research Specialist, [dansara@toronto.ca](mailto:dansara@toronto.ca), 416- 338-4941
4. RentSafe in Ontario: A Collaborative Initiative to Address Indoor Environmental Health Risks Affecting Low Income Tenants  
Contact: Jill McDowell, Health Promotion Specialist, [jmcdowe@toronto.ca](mailto:jmcdowe@toronto.ca), 416- 338-7038
5. Prevalence and Socio-demographic Correlates of Intimate Partner Violence in Toronto  
Contact: Donna Ansara, Health Research Specialist, [dansara@toronto.ca](mailto:dansara@toronto.ca), 416- 338-4941
6. Comparing Healthy Public Policies: Active Transportation Policies in Montreal and Toronto  
Contact: Ronald Macfarlane, Manager Healthy Public Policy, [rmacfar3@toronto.ca](mailto:rmacfar3@toronto.ca), 416-338-0907

### Chronic Disease Prevention

1. Sharing the Stories: TPH Youth Engagement Evaluation  
Contact: Joanne Figliano- Scott, Manager Chronic Disease Injury Prevention, [jfiglia@toronto.ca](mailto:jfiglia@toronto.ca), 416-338-3510
2. Preliminary Survey Research about Toronto Residents' Supermarket Food Purchasing Habits  
Contact: Loren Vanderlinden, Manager Healthy Public Policy, [lvander@toronto.ca](mailto:lvander@toronto.ca), 416-338-8094
3. A Guide to Safer Streets  
Contact: Monica Campbell, Director Healthy Public Policy, [mcampbe2@toronto.ca](mailto:mcampbe2@toronto.ca), 416-338-0661

## **Health Hazard Prevention and Management**

1. Metals in Newcomer Women  
Contact: Josephine Archbold, Health Research Specialist, [jarchbo@toronto.ca](mailto:jarchbo@toronto.ca), 416- 338-8095
2. The Cost Effectiveness of West Nile Virus Intervention Strategies: A Computer Simulation Model  
Contact: Howard Shapiro, Director, Healthy Environments, [hshapir@toronto.ca](mailto:hshapir@toronto.ca), 416-338-0478

## **Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control**

1. The Works' Meeting Needs Evaluation  
Contact: Margaret Gassanov, Program Evaluator, [mgassan@toronto.ca](mailto:mgassan@toronto.ca), 416-338-7303

## **Child Health**

1. Lay Community Food Advisory Programs: How They Contribute to Public Health Policy Priorities

## **Reproductive Health**

1. Linguistic Barriers and Obstetrical Care: An Organizational Analysis of Women's Pathway to the Community

## **Publications, Conference Presentations and Posters**

Disseminating research findings to research participants, funders, agencies which supported the research, public health practitioners, researchers, policy makers and the broader community is an integral component of the research process. A variety of strategies are used to disseminate research findings including: presentations to relevant communities, researchers and policy makers; presentations at scientific and other conferences; development of web-based information, popular press articles, or research briefs; and publication in scholarly journals. Depending on the project the dissemination strategy can be simple or complex, formal or informal, and short or long term. This section of the report profiles scientific publications and conference presentations/posters authored by Toronto Public Health (TPH) staff in 2015 related to research projects which received TPH ethics approval since 2011.

### **Publications**

Godin, KL; Alton, GD; Gangodawilage, HP; Procter, TD; Bourdages, NB; Blue, SE; Edwards, SA; & Horan, MJ (2015). Knowledge change associated with participation in prenatal education programs in Ontario: A cohort study publication. *The Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 106 (6), e401- e407.

Minaker, L; Mah, C; & Cook, B (2015). Healthy food retail: Local public-private partnerships to improve availability of healthy food in retail settings. *Canadian Journal of Diabetes*, 39 (1) Supp 1, S11.

### **Conference Presentations**

Adapting to a Changing World: The Evolution and Effectiveness of Online and In Person Public Health Prenatal Education Programs in Ontario  
Gillian Alton, Evelyn Vaccari, Jeanell Vanbesien  
Best Start Resource Centre Annual Conference  
February 25-27, 2015; Toronto, ON

"Anything to Help Her Awaken": Witness Actions at Overdose Scenes in Toronto  
Raffi Balian, Joyce Bernstein, Jayne Caldwell, Walter Cavalieri, Frank Crichlow, Gillian Kolla, Holly Kramer, Donna May, Butch Silver, Debbie Phillips, Stephanie Venneiri  
Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse 2015 Conference - Issues of Substance:  
Addiction Matters  
November 16-18, 2015; Vancouver, BC

Assessing Food Environments: Building Local Public Health Capacity Through Partnerships and Hands-on Training  
Leia Minaker, Catherine Mah, Brian Cook  
Canadian Public Health Association Annual Conference  
May 25-28, 2015; Vancouver, BC

Blood Metal Concentrations in Newcomer Women in Toronto, Canada  
Claire Wiseman, Dolon Chakravartty, Josephine Archbold, Ray Copes, Noureen Zawar, Abtin Parnia, Shirley Chen, Donald Cole

36<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, North America  
November 1-5, 2015; Salt Lake City, Utah

Bringing Menu Labelling to Independent Restaurants in Toronto: Feasibility Assessment  
Tara Brown, Dia Mamatis, Tina Sahay  
Dietitians of Canada National Conference  
June 4-6, 2015; Quebec City, QC

Challenging the Status Quo: Implementation of a Divisional Wide Tobacco Use Cessation Practice Policy  
Shannon Carney  
10<sup>th</sup> National Community Health Nurses Conference  
June 22-25, 2015, Winnipeg, MB

Falling Forward in a Healthy Corner Store Conversion Project  
Brian Cook  
Canadian Public Health Association Annual Conference  
May 25-28, 2015; Vancouver, BC

Feasibility Study of Toronto Public Health's Savvy Diner Menu Labelling Pilot Project  
Tara Brown, Dia Mamatis, Tina Sahay  
Canadian Public Health Association Annual Conference  
May 25-28, 2015; Vancouver, BC

Implementation of a Screen Time Reduction Initiative to Support the Primary Prevention of Childhood Obesity  
Tharany Nadarajah  
Family Resource Programs Canada 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Anniversary National Conference  
March 10-12, 2015, Hamilton, ON

Informing Healthy Futures: Toronto Public Health Student Survey Knowledge Translation Strategy  
Liz Corson  
Association of Public Health Epidemiologists of Ontario 2015 Conference: Effective Communication of Epidemiological Information  
June 14-16, 2015; London, ON

Knowledge Change Associated with In-Person and Online Prenatal Education Programs  
Natalie Bourdages  
The Ontario Public Health Convention  
March 25-27, 2015; Toronto, ON

Respiratory and Enteric Outbreaks in Toronto Long Term Care Homes, 2007-2013  
Sylvia Ota, Karen Lemay, Rebecca Stuart, Anne Arthur, Michael Finkelstein  
The Ontario Public Health Convention  
March 25-27, 2015; Toronto, ON

Surveillance of Infections in Long Term Care Homes  
Debra Hayden, Michael Finkelstein, Dana Al-Bargash  
The Ontario Public Health Convention  
March 25-27, 2015; Toronto, ON

Toronto Public Health Student Survey: Lessons for Population Health Assessment  
David McKeown, Liz Corson, Jennifer Burgess, Donna Psaila  
The Ontario Public Health Convention  
March 25-27, 2015; Toronto, ON

Undertaking a Health Impact Assessment for Urban Agriculture in Toronto: Informing an  
Emerging Policy Agenda  
Lauren Baker, Josephine Archbold, Kate Mulligan  
The Ontario Public Health Convention  
March 25-27, 2015; Toronto, ON

### **Conference Posters**

Biomonitoring of Newcomer Women from South and East Asia in Two Canadian Cities  
Meredith Curran, Doug Haines, Tom Kosatsky, Linda Dix-Cooper, Ray Copes, Donald  
Cole, Claire Wiseman, Dolon Chakravartty, Josephine Archbold  
36<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, North  
America  
November 1-5, 2015; Salt Lake City, Utah

Emergency Department Visits for Cold-Related Injuries among Homeless Adults: A 5-  
Year Cohort Study in Toronto, Canada  
Paige Zhang, Stephanie Gower, Kate Bassil, Alex Kiss, Marko Katic, Stephen Hwang  
American Public Health Association  
October 31-November 4, 2015; Chicago, Illinois

Newcomer Women in the Greater Toronto Area - The Case of Trans-national Metal  
Exposures in a Global Environment  
Abtin Parnia, Dolon Chakravartty, Claire Wiseman, Josephine Archbold, Ray Copes,  
Noureen Zawar, Shirley Chen, Donald Cole  
Canadian Conference on Global Health  
November 5-7, 2015; Montreal QC