

PhysioLINK

May 1, 2020

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I hope that you and your family are keeping safe and healthy during these challenging times. Thank you to all of our faculty, staff, and students for your continued resilience during this unprecedented period. With your outstanding dedication and support, we have managed to maintain the critical operations of the Department and enabled our students to complete their terms. Well done everyone!

Yesterday, President Gertler issued a memo including the university's plans going forward as we begin to shift from crisis response to planning for a gradual restart. [I urge everyone to read this memo](#). We will continue to keep you updated as we work towards this next phase. As always, do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your continued commitment as we navigate the situation together.

Scott P. Heximer, PhD

Ernest B. and Leonard B. Smith Chair, Department of Physiology

HONOURS & AWARDS



Prof. Stephen Matthews has been elected President of the Society for Reproductive Investigation (SRI). SRI was launched in 1953 (initially as the Society for Gynecologic Investigation), and is now the premier International Society, with 1000 members worldwide, promoting the translational interface of reproductive science. The mission of SRI is to advance reproductive and women's health care through outstanding basic, translational, and clinical science and by training and mentoring future generations of investigators.

Congratulations to all of our graduate students below upon the successful completion of their degree programs. We are very proud of your accomplishments, and wish you the very best in your future endeavors!

Surname	Given Name	Program	Supervisor
Chatterjee	Antara	MSc	S Lye / O Shynlov
Fantin	Amanda	MSc	I Rogers
Gong	Haifan	MSc	HS Sun
Guet-McCreight	Alexandre	PhD	F Skinner
Inchauspe	Jeanne	MSc	S Josselyn
Khroud	Manroop	MSc	T Jin
Kim	Ryungrae	MSc	H Zhang
Markovic	Melanie	PhD	P Brubaker
Sivakumaran	Sanghavy	MSc	E Lambe
Walia	Khyati	MSc	P Monnier

FACULTY IN THE NEWS

Anita McGahan, Professor at the Rotman School of Management and Physiology (cross-appointee), has been in the news offering her expert advice on strategies for reopening the economy. Anita is an expert on strategic management and global health – “a specialty that seems made for just this moment”.



- [Toronto Star asks experts which businesses will open first](#)
- [Quebec announces it will reopen retail, construction and manufacturing starting next week](#)
- Anita McGahan on the strategies for easing restrictions in various provinces. ([CTV News Channel](#))

SENIOR COLLEGE GOES VIRTUAL



Harold Atwood, principal of Senior College, a campus group for all retired U of T faculty members and librarians, is using Zoom to stay connected.

“We had to do it to protect our members, comments Atwood. We’re all retirees and in the age group that’s particularly vulnerable to the virus. We realized we couldn’t put people at risk.”

[Read on to find out how they moved online and maintained their sense of community](#)

SLEEP HEALTH DURING LOCKDOWN

Richard L. Horner, PhD, FCAHS

Professor, Department of Medicine, and Department of Physiology University of Toronto

Canada Research Chair

Author of *The Universal Pastime: Sleep and Rest Explained*

Both the news and personal experiences are constantly informing us that everything we are now going through is different, *very different*. Among these news items are reports that sleep is suffering in many people. Given that poor sleep has adverse effects on physical and mental health, and that worse physical and mental health can further worsen sleep, then we have a recipe for a problem.

I have been asked several times by different people and outlets for tips to support sleep health at this time when many of us are spending lots of time indoors at home. There are three major points for everybody, whether young and old, living with others or alone:

- (i) **Keep a rein on our body clocks:** Establishing robust routines for times to get up and go to bed, and periods for meals and physical activities all help to regularize our body clocks and promote health. Having a robust routine in the morning and evening also importantly prevents our body clocks from drifting to extreme times. For example, drifting to become an extreme night owl (as often occurs in adolescents and students, and a proportion of adults) is like living on another time zone without going anywhere (*'social jet lag'*). Avoiding disruption of the healthy routines that synchronize our body clocks and regularize our sleep-wake cycles keeps us physically and mentally healthy and resilient, and productive in the time zone we actually live in.
- (ii) **See the sun:** A powerfully important (but often vastly underappreciated) strategy for better sleep is regular exposure to outdoor daylight. Exposure to natural sunlight in the morning especially helps to synchronize our body clocks, and it strongly determines the time of release of the hormone melatonin at night. This effect powerfully and positively influences our sleep and wake patterns, mood, and importantly helps consolidate a full night of sleep.
- (iii) **Set our boundaries:** If circumstances at home allow it is helpful, as much as possible, to set robust boundaries between work-place, social/family-space and sleep-space. These boundaries also include the time set-aside for each: e.g., having core hours for work, family, social interactions (in-person or virtual), exercise, and other activities. Other boundaries include indulging vices no more than usual and thinking of personally relaxing strategies to bridge the perhaps inevitable and occasional periods of insomnia. Given that the harder we try to sleep the harder it is to get there, sometimes it is best to take a break, park the stress, and indulge ourselves in things we find personally relaxing: e.g., listening to a relaxing podcast or music, reminiscing over fond memories, or some other pleasure.

It may seem 'a bit much' to set so much importance on routines and seeing the sun outdoors from the perspective of the body clock, sleep, and mental and physical health. In that case I refer you to two perspectives that maybe helpful.

[Keep reading....](#)

GASP News

We hope you are managing to stay safe in the midst of this global crisis. These are unprecedented times, and by their nature they wear on our mental and physical well-being. For all of us, at one point or another, the uncertain reality of this “new normal” brings certain challenges. When it does, we encourage you to take some time to process it as you need, and to be kind to yourself as you deal with whatever emotions arise. These are hard times, and we can all use a bit of compassion.

Virtual events

GASP held its first virtual social event, a Games night! A big shout-out to Jordan, Xavier, and Dylan for putting it all together, and thanks to those who attended (a picture of some attendees below)! We will be holding more virtual events in the next few weeks to help keep us all connected, and to have a bit of fun. **Keep an eye out for upcoming events!**



COVID-19 Fundraiser

GASP is planning a fundraiser to help Foodshare Toronto, a local organization delivering emergency food boxes to those who need it most during this crisis. Keep an eye out for future emails on how to participate in this endeavour!

Shahin Khodaei
GASP President

Stay well everyone!

#weareinthistogether



[Please continue to visit the central COVID-19 hub
for the U of T community](#)