

Megan MacNeil - University of Alberta

Project: *"Co-designing Equitable Solutions for Pediatric Chronic Pain in Primary Care: An Integrated Knowledge Mobilization Approach"*

Background



Chronic pain is a significant public health issue, affecting 1 in 5 Canadian youth. Early identification of chronic pain and delivery of quality pain care can optimize physical and mental health, social connectedness, and educational outcomes. Like other chronic conditions, equity-denied groups are

disproportionately impacted by pain. In 2021, the Canadian Pain Task Force prioritized the need for “equitable and consistent access to a continuum of timely, evidence-informed, and person-centred pain care and supports across jurisdictions” However, youth in Canada currently face inconsistent and inadequate access to primary care, as well as enduring prolonged waits for specialized services. Many youths with chronic pain have limited access to primary care and, if referred to specialized pain services, experience long wait times. While considerable evidence exists to support quality pain care in specialized chronic pain services, there is limited literature examining how to facilitate patient-centred, evidence-based chronic pain care practices in primary and community care settings.

This study seeks to understand how to improve access to pain services in primary care for Canadian youth experiencing chronic pain. We will use patient journey mapping techniques to understand how and when youth access care and identify gaps in care and equitable patient-centred solutions. We will then conduct an evidence synthesis to develop an understanding of current knowledge mobilization and implementation strategies and tools used in primary care to promote evidence-based, quality care. Finally, we will co-design recommendations with youth, caregivers, and other system partners to address access to chronic pain services for youth in settings outside of specialized tertiary pain services.

Bio

Megan's journey towards a career dedicated to co-creating innovative and evidence-based healthcare programs has been a culmination of professional, academic and lived experience. After over 15 years in healthcare, leading community public health and digital technology organizations, she began her PhD at the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta. Megan also works as a Knowledge Broker with the University of Calgary and the Chronic Pain Network, one of five chronic disease networks funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR). In this role, she works with people living with pain and partnering sites to action the work of the Network to date. She is particularly interested in facilitating partnerships across sectors and services to ensure children and youth have access to evidence-informed pain prevention and treatment services. Megan's PhD project will draw on patient-orientated research approaches, knowledge mobilization theories, and frameworks to improve the equitable delivery of pediatric chronic pain services in primary and community care.