

THE LOOP

The Foundation's Quarterly Update



Winter 2023



Optimizing medication safety

Article courtesy of [Dr. Paula Rochon](#)

Research from Women's Age Lab (WAL) has shown that sex and gender-related variables play an important role in prescribing decisions for older adults. This has crucial implications in understanding medication appropriateness and the promotion of more equitable health care outcomes. Through iKASCADE, an international project supported by GENDER-NET Plus and national funders, WAL engaged international partners to identify key prescribing cascades and explore international differences in the way medications are prescribed to women and men and the way potentially inappropriate prescribing is recognized. The purpose is to improve medication safety for older adults by addressing prescribing cascades through a sex and gender lens.

WAL recently completed the vignette portion of this study conducting interviews using the "think aloud" interviewing technique, which explores conscious and unconscious thought processes of physicians when prescribing medications to their older adult patients.

The results will offer valuable insights into how gender biases, along with the prescriber's sex, may affect prescribing practices. Outcomes will also explore potential gender-related explanations for differences seen in the frequency of prescribing cascades in older men and women.

This research contributes to the global understanding of gender bias in health care. It paves the way for the development of targeted interventions to address these

biases and encourages further investigation into the influence of cultural factors. This international collaboration represents a notable achievement for WAL, underlining the importance of a cross-cultural perspective in our research, and highlights the potential of these collaborations in optimizing the way drug therapies are prescribed globally for older adults.

For more information, click here to view a webinar presented by Dr. Rochon on [Optimizing medication safety](#).

Paula Rochon, Founding Director, Women's Age Lab; Senior Scientist, Women's College Hospital; Professor, Division of Geriatric Medicine, Department of Medicine, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and RTOERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine, University of Toronto

New wellness resource made possible by our donors

In response to the isolation that many older adults experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Gail Low, associate professor of nursing at the University of Alberta, and her Living Well Research Team conceived an innovative and groundbreaking project called ***Mentally Healthy Living After Social Distancing – A Study of Older Canadians***. You may have read about the project in the 2023 summer and fall issues of Renaissance Magazine.

Dr. Low also realized a need for a funding agency that supports innovative and practical projects like hers. This is precisely why she partnered with the RTOERO Foundation. The Foundation immediately connected with the University of Alberta's vision for seniors' health and well-being and partnered with them to bring this project to life.

The RTOERO Foundation is a unique organization because it focuses on supporting projects that produce practical resources that can be shared with older adults across Canada. Materials like this cookbook not only share important research insights but also provide tangible tools that people can actually use in their everyday lives.

Recognizing how valuable this project would be to RTOERO members and all Canadian seniors, the RTOERO Foundation approved a proposal to fund Dr. Low's project in its entirety.

This project studied the effects of the pandemic on the mental health of older adults,

and developed a practical resource to help seniors manage their mental health and improve nutrition.

As part of the research, 1,327 Canadians 60 years of age and older were surveyed to learn about their mentally healthy living strategies during the pandemic. The learnings are captured in a new electronic booklet called *Cooking up calm*. Download it for free!

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Social isolation and loneliness: what's the difference, and what can we do?

[Social isolation](#) can be defined as a complete or near-complete lack of contact between an individual and society. It can be easy to disregard because the danger isn't imminent. It's often gradual, brought on by a life change like retirement, the death of a spouse or a change in health. People who are caring for aging loved ones are also at risk.

We believe RTOERO has the power to make a difference. Through voluntary support from within our network of over 86,000 members, we can help Canadian seniors struggling with loneliness. Community agencies and geriatrics researchers across the country are turning their attention to this growing issue and they need our help.

Despite the great work we've done to improve the lives of older adults, there is still so much to be done. I want to ask you to consider supporting the RTOERO Foundation. Over the past 11 years RTOERO members have proven how committed they are to helping build community and improve social engagement. RTOERO members prove their compassion, vision and ongoing generosity everyday. So, I thought you may be interested in this opportunity to make a difference in someone's life as well.

Please choose to support the campaign by making a donation - and consider these important facts about the RTOERO Foundation when doing so:

- **RTOERO member fees are not allocated to the Foundation**
- **Our programs are sustained through fundraising**
- **Your donation is tax-deductible**

Call us at 1-800-361-9888 ext.271, mail a cheque to: The RTOERO Foundation, 18 Spadina Rd., Toronto ON M5R 2S7 or simply donate online. Thank you in advance for your support.

The RTOERO Foundation strives to serve its community under the strictest guidelines of the industry



Over the past several months, the RTOERO Foundation has been working tirelessly to complete its membership application for Imagine Canada's standards program.

Imagine Canada's mission is to support the 2.6 million people and the organizations that make up the nonprofit sector so that they can better serve individuals and communities across the country.

Through their advocacy efforts, research and services, Imagine Canada helps strengthen the sector. Imagine Canada's Standards Program offers a Canada-wide set of shared standards for charities and nonprofits designed to strengthen their capacity and monitor and improve their practices.

Organizations are able to demonstrate publicly that they meet these standards by participating in a voluntary peer-review-based accreditation process and receiving formal accreditation.

The Foundation is currently preparing for its formal accreditation. The application process is rigorous and includes proof of sound operational procedures in the areas of board governance, financial accountability & transparency, fundraising, staff management and volunteer involvement.

Membership with Imagine Canada signifies that our Foundation is operating at its highest capacity and serving its community under the strictest guidelines of the industry.

It is a badge of honour that the RTOERO Foundation looks forward to proudly displaying to all RTOERO members in the near future.

For more information about the work of the RTOERO Foundation, please visit us on the [web](#).

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